

Issue 08/Winter 2024
English Original Transcripts

Conversations on the Leading Edge
of Knowledge & Discovery

NEW THINKING ALLOWED MAGAZINE



Quarterly Highlight
Super Experiencers
Sean Esbjörn-Hargens

New Thinking Allowed
YouTube Interviews
Diane Hennacy Powell
Gary Lachman
Swami Sarvapriyananda
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MAGAZINE PUBLISHED BY THE NEW THINKING ALLOWED FOUNDATION

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Guest Host of New Thinking Allowed

Leanne Whitney



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LOVE AND COMPASSION: EXPANDING INTUITION AND PSYCHIC ABILITIES

By Emmy Vadnais and Jeffrey Mishlove



“Learning compassion is at the heart of psychic development.” –Jeffrey Mishlove

Intuition is a natural ability. We are all born with it. It is our inner knowing that provides information and guidance for the best path forward. It is always speaking to us if we know how to listen. It can help us with every decision and how to live a meaningful, purposeful, and joyful life.¹

Intuition is our higher awareness and the underlying foundation of who we are. It may be accessed locally—internally within ourselves. When we receive information non-locally—beyond space and time—it may be known as psychic functioning. This includes telepathy and remote viewing or clairvoyance. The word *psychic* means pertaining to the soul.

Intuition can come in flashes, synchronicities, and through dreams. Maybe this is part of the soul's deepest longings or intentions that we're not always consciously aware of. We may not know how that occurred. We may wonder, “Did I make that happen? Or did that spontaneously happen to me? Or did someone send it to me?” If you want to connect with your intuition on-demand, shall we say, it is always there ready

Emmy Vadnais

Emmy Vadnais

photo: Kathy Van Guilder

1 Vadnais, E. (2020). *Intuitive development: How to trust your inner knowing for guidance with relationships, health, and spirituality*. Emmy Vadnais.

and waiting for you. We just need to quiet the chatter in the mind, the analytical, judging mind, which has purpose but can get in the way.

Quantum entanglement suggests that we are at one with everything. Love is the interconnectedness that binds us to each other and all. This is not pollyannaish, but true authentic unconditional love can raise us to the highest heights and possibilities in all areas of our lives. The fundamental nature of who we are and how we can positively connect may be through love.

Jeffrey Mishlove emphasizes the importance of compassion in psychic development because he notices how we unconsciously “numb ourselves” to avoid being overwhelmed

by the pain, suffering, and anger in the world. The strategy is successful, as far as it goes. However, if we wish to open up our natural psychic talents, it is essential to feel compassion for ourselves and for the world.

There are many methods to develop or—uncover—intuition that is always there for us, day or night. These include various ways to quiet the mind, such as meditation that cultivate focus and attention. We can cultivate our perception to receive information that may come in images, sounds, words, body sensations, feelings through the five senses, emotions, and symbols. Of course, our intuition may speak to us spontaneously through dreams, flashes of insight, signs, and synchronicities.

RELAXATION AND COMPASSION

In his foundational work, and book of the same name, *The Relaxation Response* by Herbert Benson, he describes how relaxation practices—particularly those incorporating positive emotional focus—can trigger the parasympathetic nervous system, reducing stress hormones and physiological tension. He found that the mental focus on positive emotions, like love and compassion, amplifies this response, demonstrating tangible effects on heart rate, blood pressure, and cortisol levels.²

PSI CONDUCTIVE STATES AND TRAITS

Optimizing your receptivity and connection to your intuition is referred to as being *psi conductive* in the field of parapsychology. In 1974, research by William G. Braud indicated that a highly relaxed state is favorable for the occurrence of dramatic instances of paranormal or psychic phenomena.

A portrait of Jeffrey Mishlove, a bald man with a friendly expression, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a red patterned tie. He is sitting at a wooden desk with his hands clasped. A small rainbow-colored pin is visible on his lapel. The background is a dark, starry space.

Jeffrey Mishlove

Jeffrey Mishlove
photo: Kim Jew

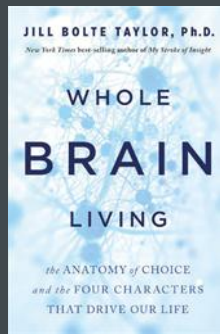
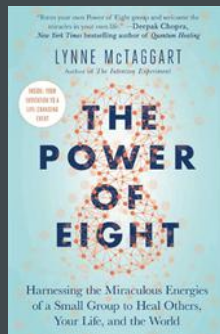
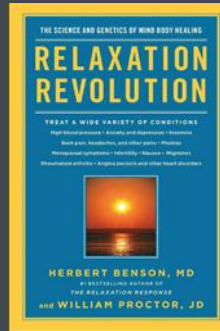
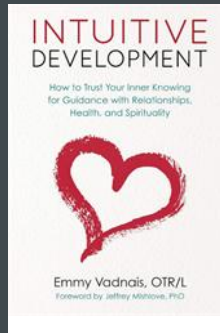
2 Benson, H., & Proctor, W. (2012). *Science and genetics of mind-body healing*. Scribner.

Experiments found that muscular and mental relaxation appears to be quite conducive for the occurrence of paranormal phenomena such as telepathy and clairvoyance. Relaxation was induced through the use of a modified Jacobson's progressive relaxation technique and suggestions for mental quietude and passivity. Scores were highly accurate and significant in tests of telepathic and clairvoyant knowledge.³

THE MIRROR EFFECT

In Emmy Vadnais' recent interview with Lynne McTaggart, they discussed the *mirror effect* where the senders in her intention experiments reported a rebound effect where they also experienced profound positive changes in their lives. Altruism and love are key components in intention experiments according to her.⁴

Many interviews on *New Thinking Allowed* touch upon, deeply dive into, or conclude with love, oneness, and interconnectedness as the central theme. Near-death experiences, after-death communication, and other phenomena suggest that the primary message of what we are learning and is most important, is love.



LOVE

When you switch into your loving self, your thinking changes. Emmy Vadnais recently had a conversation with Jill Bolte Taylor, PhD about her book, *Whole Brain Living*.⁵ She is a Harvard-trained neuroanatomist whose research specialized in understanding how our brain creates our perception of reality. At the age of 37, she experienced a severe hemorrhage in the left hemisphere of her brain. As a result of her stroke, she could not walk, talk, read, write, or recall any of her life.

She shares how she experienced a stroke that completely took one half of her brain offline, the left hemisphere. This is the left side responsible for language, organization, and our shadow emotions. It is also the part that experiences our self as an identity that is separate from others and everything in the universe. However, her right hemisphere was still operating. She felt a oneness with everything without boundaries. She felt unconditional love and sensed energy with no separation, blending with everything else. It took eight years for her to completely rebuild her brain to recover all physical, emotional, and thinking abilities. Nevertheless, it left her with an indelible memory of our inter-

connectedness with the entire universe. That is the very basis of unconditional love.

3 Braud, W. G. (1974). Relaxation as a psi-conducive state. *Bulletin of the Psychonomic Society*, 3(2), 115–118. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03333412>

4 McTaggart, L. (2018). *The power of eight: Harnessing the miraculous energies of a small group to heal others, your life, and the world*. Scribner.

5 Taylor, J. B. (2021). *Whole brain living: The anatomy of choice and the four characters that drive our life*. Hay House.





Sean Esbjörn-Hargens

Sean Esbjörn-Hargens, PhD, is Dean of Integral Education at the California Institute for Human Science and Program Director of the MA/PhD program in Integral Noetic Sciences which has an optional concentration in Anomalous Studies.

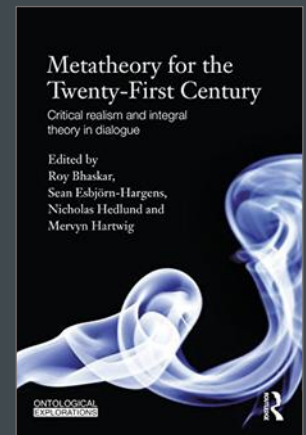
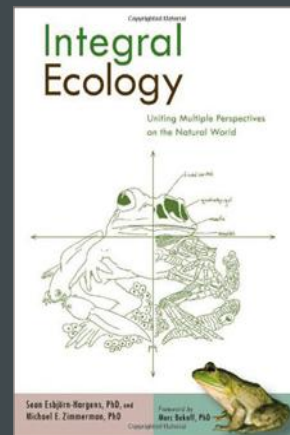
Dr. Esbjörn-Hargens earned his Ph.D. in Humanities with a focus on Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness from the California Institute of Integral Studies. His work is characterized by a metadisciplinary approach, integrating insights from numerous disciplines across the hard sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities. In 2004, he founded the *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice*, serving as its executive editor for nine years and publishing over 4,000 pages of material from more than 100 authors.

Dr. Esbjörn-Hargens has authored or edited eight books, including the co-authored *Integral Ecology* and co-edited volumes *Metatheory for the Twenty-first Century*. He is also the founding editor of the *SUNY series in Integral Theory*, which has published twelve volumes since 2008. His publication record extends to numerous articles and book chapters, solidifying his position as a leading voice in integral studies.

In 2011, Dr. Esbjörn-Hargens launched MetaIntegral, a leadership and consulting company that works with various organizations to measure

different types of social impact. Building on his diverse expertise, in 2018 he founded The Institute of Exo Studies, pioneering a new field that draws on over 50 disciplines to explore anomalous and extraordinary experiences of our multiverse.

Dr. Esbjörn-Hargens continues to break new ground in integral education and research. His current work includes developing new integrative mixed methods of research and mapping the neurological correlates of the highest stages of adult development. Through his various roles and initiatives, he remains committed to cultivating global consciousness and grappling with big questions about the mind and the nature of reality.





Original video interview on www.newthinkingallowed.com

Published to YouTube on August 12, 2024

SUPER EXPERIENCERS

JM: Hello and welcome. I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. Our topic today is Super Experiencers and my guest Sean Esbjörn-Hargens is the Dean of Integral Noetic Sciences at the California Institute of Human Science. This program is one of the only accredited PhD degree programs in the United States where one can study UFOs and other anomalous realities from both a scientific and humanistic perspective.

Sean founded and served for nine years as executive editor of the *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice*, an academic peer-reviewed journal. In 2018, he founded the Institute of Exo Studies through which he is joining others in pioneering the field of exo studies, which draws on over 50 disciplines to help make sense of anomalous and extraordinary experiences of our multiverse in all of its complexity and mystery. The California Institute of Human Science is based in the San Diego area. However, it's largely now an online program reaching students anywhere in the world. Sean currently lives in the state of Maine and now I'll switch over to the internet video.

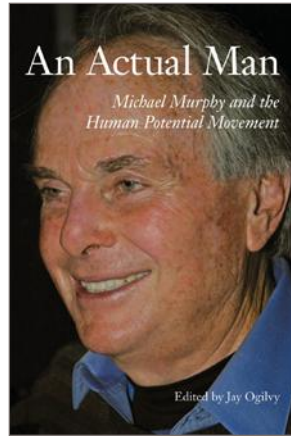
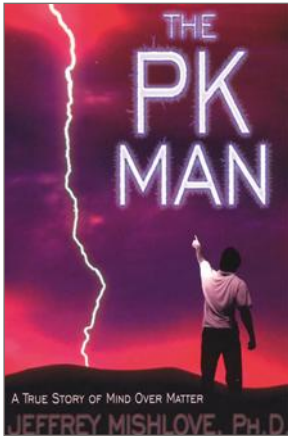
Welcome, Sean. It's a pleasure to be with you once again.

SEH: Yeah, likewise. It's been almost two years since we last sat down and had a conversation, so I'm looking forward to seeing where this one goes.

JM: And incidentally, for the benefit of our viewers, our previous conversation was on the topic of non-human intelligence, realms of non-human intelligence. It's a wonderful conversation. But today we're going to shift ever so slightly and talk about the concept of the super experiencers, which actually is a topic dear to my heart because my book, *The PK Man*, is an in-depth study of a super experiencer, someone who had psychokinetic activity, poltergeist activity, contact with alien beings, psychokinetic control over large-scale systems, the weather and so on. In many ways he was, you might say, an ultimate super experiencer, but undoubtedly there are many more people out there like that.

SEH: Yeah, there are. I'm really discovering just how ubiquitous it is. I think when I began kind of conceiving of this project a number of years ago, I assumed it was somewhat common but not very common, but there would be enough people out there to maybe do an in-depth study of it. But now that I'm basically a year into actually launching the research project and people are emailing me and telling me about all the wide range of anomalous and noetic experiences that they have or have had throughout their life, I'm starting to realize I need to reassess my assumption. I think, as Michael





Murphy points out, this is just the future of the body. This is our innate human capacity to be in participatory relationship with the multiverse. So I think it's much more common than people realize. My hope with this research is that it's going to help highlight that and then it's also going to help us understand some of the different layers and dynamics of individuals who seem to have this wide range of anomalous experiences available to them.

JM: How would you define a super experiencer as opposed to a regular experiencer?

SEH: Yeah, I'll do that. But let me just give a little context of kind of how I arrived at the notion of super experiencer because it kind of helps set the stage. I was noticing in my own life and in colleagues and friends of mine who were having anomalous experiences and also in the literature that there seemed to be some individuals who primarily had one kind of, let's call it superpower, right, where they would have a number of angelic experiences throughout their life. Or they would, on a semi-regular basis, have precognitive dreams that seemed really important and helped them gain an understanding of their life and future events. Other people

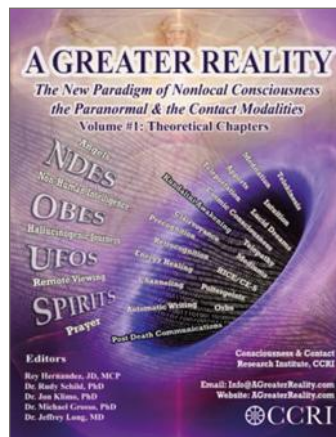
might have a series of Bigfoot encounters. Other people who are wanting to have Bigfoot encounters aren't having any of that happen in their life. Also in the UAP space, in the UFO space, which I'm very interested in, you would have some people who are seeing them all the time and other people who would love to see a UFO in the sky.

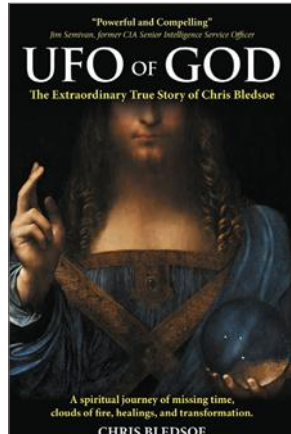
So I became really curious, like, why are some people having these experiences and other people not having these experiences? Then why do some people seem to have basically kind of one set of experiences and other people seem to have another set of experiences? I started to hypothesize that it might be related to our multiple subtle bodies and the various inner senses connected to our subtle bodies and our chakras. So that basically kind of the working hypothesis is that different individuals have different parts of their esoteric anatomy kind of activated and integrated. That enables them to have different types of perceptual experiences of phenomenon that are not part of general perception or experience in our consensus reality.

But then I started noticing that some people seem to have experiences across the full range, right? They were having poltergeist experiences. They were having precognitive dreams. They were

having UFO encounters and Bigfoot encounters. I was just like, "Oh my gosh, this is crazy. Why are these people so open that of all this phenomena seems to present itself to them at one point or another throughout their life?"

Then I decided—I was inspired by the free research and Ray Hernandez and what they were doing—I wanted to build on that work because that was about ten





years ago that they ran that survey. I decided to reach out to Chris Bledsoe and who is a well-known experiencer in the UFO space. Then also to another person, Melinda Greer (no relationships to Stephen Greer, a different Greer), she is a retired doctor. I sent them both an email because I knew they were super experiencers in a sense.

That term hadn't yet like fully coalesced, but I knew that they were these individuals that just had a lifetime of experiences. Though interestingly with Chris Bledsoe, his really started after his big event that happened just a few years ago. But as is often the case when you start asking these individuals questions, it turns out they had a near-death experience when they're young and they had an out-of-body experience, and there tend to be phenomena and anomalous experiences that go back way early in their life. I emailed both these individuals a list of like 30 experiences. Basically, I just dumped every possible experience I could think of on this email. I just had so many different possible transpersonal, psychedelic, noetic, anomalous experiences, and I just said, "Hey, can you just go down this list, and next to each item just write yes, no, or maybe? I just want to get a sense of the range of experiences you've had."

Melinda responded and about 75% of the items she said "yes" to. That blew me away. I was just like, "Wow, like an individual who's experienced that full range of weirdness, that's just crazy cool." Then Chris responds, and Chris had said "yes" to every item except body marks. Then I thought, "Oh my gosh, wow, I'm just scratching the surface here."

The feeling I had was, if I could have come up with ten more items and put them on the list, Chris probably would have said yes to most of those as well. So this in effect kind of launched the super experiencer research project.

The way I define it at this point, though, we're in the process of confirming the operational definition with my advisory board, which I'm very happy and proud to say that you're a member of, Jeff. So thank you again for supporting me in this work in that context. Right now, I'm defining *super experiencer* as an individual who has experienced four or more anomalous categories of experience throughout their life. That could be that maybe they had a five or six year period when they were younger. It could be that they had nothing when they were young, but now as an adult, they're having that. In the recent course that I taught at the California Institute for Human Science, where I'm program director of a master's and PhD program in integral noetic sciences, I just taught an anomalous research practicum course. In that course, we—me with, over a dozen graduate students—began creating the first draft of the survey questions that will be part of phase one of the super experiencer research project.

So far, we've come up with about 500 questions, which is a lot. But the thing is, we identified the major categories of experience. When I say a super experiencer is someone who's had four or more of these experiences, currently, these are the categories that I have in mind: there's out of body experiences, near death experiences, psychic experiences, psychedelic experiences, encounters with non-human intelligences, transpersonal dream experiences, paranormal experiences, UAP encounters, and mystical or noetic experiences. These nine categories emerged in the context of us doing ex-



tensive literature review, talking with a lot of different super experiencers, and trying to get a sense of what are the major camps that these experiences fall into.

Now, of course, whenever you're doing this kind of research, it's problematic because people are having a holistic experience in real time that often ticks many of those boxes. So to get them to kind of pull it apart and say, "well, it goes in that box and this part goes in that box"—of course, that's challenging and there's limits and there's problems with that. Nevertheless, the way we're designing it is people can tick multiple boxes, they can highlight the links between these aspects of the experience, but you have to differentiate before you can integrate. So this is the differentiation phase. There seem to be these nine major overlapping non mutually exclusive categories of anomalous and noetic experiences that people have. Some people tend to gravitate towards just one or two of them, some people have four or more. Like you were saying the PK man has like six, seven, eight of these ticked on his sheet, so to speak.

JM: I would imagine that one of the important characteristics of any super experiencer living in a modern Western culture is that they're surrounded by other people who are in denial that any of this is real.

SEH: Yeah. There's a course I'm teaching in the PhD program this fall called *What is Real? Scientific, Philosophical, and Occult Perspectives*. Because one of the first questions that people ask themselves when they're experiencers or super experiencers is, "Am I crazy? What's real?" It really raises these existential issues because we live in a secular, modernist, scientific, reductionistic, materialist paradigm.



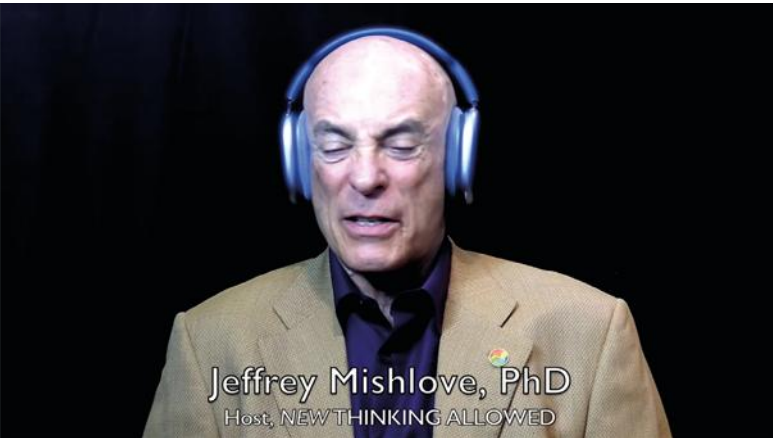
That doesn't lend itself well to being able to make sense of these kinds of experiences. So they're very alienating. People who have them often don't tell many people about them. Many of the emails I've gotten in the last six months [are] from self-identified super experiencers who have learned about the work I'm doing. They send me an email kind of giving me a list of their experiences. They often will say, "I've only shared this with a few people." These aren't things you generally talk about.

One of the things I'm really trying to change and challenge with the PhD program, is creating a new wave of researchers and thought leaders in this space to really help bring down the social taboo around these phenomenon and enable us to have more interesting conversations about the full range of experiences, weird or otherwise, that human beings seem to have on a semi-regular basis.

JM: I gather that your approach would fit into what is now being called post-materialist science.

SEH: Absolutely, yeah. That's a frame that we use in the program and that I'm using in the context of this research. Just to sketch out the three phases of the research so listeners have a sense of kind of where the research is headed: It's basically a six plus year project. The first year and a half is launching a survey, a global survey with, as I mentioned, basically these nine categories. If someone





indicates they've had three or four of them, they will be then provided with like 20 to 30 questions about that experience, so that the survey will kind of dynamically adjust to the number of types of experiences you've had. From this, we're hoping to get about 5,000 people to fill it out from all around the world.

Then we're going to identify 100 to 150 individuals for in-depth interviews and then psychometric assessment. The psychometric assessment, there's going to be like a dozen different instruments used to just establish the baseline of normalcy to point out that these people are not crazy. These are just average, healthy, psychologically mature individuals who are having these experiences and a wide range of them.

Because one of the things that happens is when a super experiencer starts talking about the full range of their experiences, they sound crazy to most people. It's one thing for someone to say, "Yeah, I saw an angel once." It's another thing for someone to say, "Well, I saw some fairies and then there were poltergeists in our house for five years. Then I had this near death experience and I, you know, this happened, ..." Then people just shut down.



Professor Gary Nolan,
Stanford University

So then we'll have these in-depth interviews of like six to eight hours, really going into the phenomenology of the experiences—the direct experiences—and really trying to get as much detail about the most significant events in that person's life.

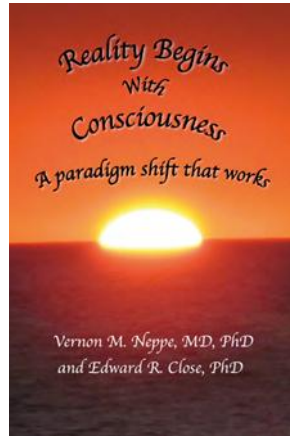
Then phase three is going to be doing brain imaging and subtle energy analysis of these individuals, inspired in part by Garry Nolan's work on the basal ganglia and looking at the hyperconnectivity there in the brain, and trying to see what comes first ... like, do super experiencers, are they born with this hyperconnectivity, or through a series of experiences, does it build and develop this hyperconnectivity, or does it go in both directions, which I suspect is likely the case.

So there's three phases, each phase is a year and a half to two years, and we're just getting started.

JM: From what you just told me though, it seems as if you have a particular bias, which is that the super experiencers are not going to show signs of mental illness and I wonder why you feel that way.

SEH: Well, I do feel that people who have mental illness also have access to these experiences. In fact, you know, the work by Robert Falconer with *Others Within Us*, he's done a lot of great work to highlight the long history, globally, of individuals who have mental illness, who have access to different types of encounters and experiences. So I do think that is very much the case and I think we need to revamp the DSM and our whole kind of mental





health professions to recognize that these anomalous experiences are had by people *with* mental illness and people *without* mental illness and that is not linked to kind of mental fitness in that sense, that is more just kind of a basic capacity of human beings, and that mental illness might actually give you certain access to certain kinds of real experiences that in a materialist culture we tend to write off and just collapse with the mental illness diagnosis, just so we don't have to deal with it.

So these are issues that I want to get at and have the research help shine a light on. But in order to make certain kinds of progress in the conversation, and also in terms of research and just working with individuals who are able to be part of the research process, we're starting with average healthy individuals, psychologically and emotionally.

JM: I'm sure there are many people who are very healthy psychologically. I know Vernon Neppé, a neuropsychiatrist, maintains that people who report a lot of spontaneous paranormal experiences have what he called temporal lobe lability.

SEH: Part of what we're wanting to do in the phase three is to really do a deep review of the research that's been done up to this point, and to start to identify what are some of the possible biological and chemical substratums for these kinds of experiences, and also avoid reducing the experiences to

that. This is where the post-materialist orientation comes from—because even if there is a “god-spot” of one sort or another, that doesn't mean we can necessarily reduce the phenomena to that biomechanical brain function. Even if we have DMT in the brain naturally, that might just serve as a portal into these other realms that are ontologically distinct from ours. So we're definitely going to hold a pot-materialistic frame even when looking at the various biological and physical and genetic elements that might be involved.

JM: Post-materialist is a funny word to me, because in a way it suggests what it is not, rather than what it is. How do you view post-materialist science?

SEH: Like you, I have some misgivings about the term. I use it because it's one of the terms out there that people have a sense of what it's referring to. I think there are either potentially other alternate terms or maybe that will emerge, because I think whenever you're defining something in contradistinction to something, it's not as powerful as what might be the case otherwise.

I think often in the context of just the multiverse and the metaverse, and multidimensional metaverse. We just live in what I call a wild cosmos, where we're just surrounded by various types of intelligences. For me, like Vernon's work ... he does a great job of highlighting the complexity of the cosmos we live in. I think we need a new cosmology. One that does a better job of making room for all of these phenomena that seem to defy our particular version of physics. I think that part of the work that lies ahead is kind of a new kind of expanded cosmology and not just the quantum theory consciousness models. I think



those are creating a lot of contributions to the conversation, but I think we really have to also draw on the indigenous traditions and their cosmologies, and the esoteric traditions and their understanding of subtle energies, subtle realms, and subtle beings. There's a lot of work to be done, but it's exciting to be part of the process, trying to figure it all out.



JM: Yeah, we seem to live in an environment where certain world views get privileged. Like if it can be reduced down to physics, even quantum physics, it seems to have more status. Whereas if some indigenous person talking about their animal spirit guide, we tend to think of that as somehow a less privileged explanation.

SEH: Yeah, in exo studies, which is a body of work I've been developing for the last five years, there's a number of core concepts that I've been creating and expanding and using kind of in a space. You've likely heard of Occam's razor, which is, to your point, this idea of like trim it down to the most simplest explanation and then go with that. Well, part of exo studies is doing what I call kind of a double methodology—where, if you're going to use Occam's razor, you also have to use what I call *Pollock's brush*. Here I'm referring to Jackson Pollock, where you have to complexify things, as much as you simplify things. Then you compare the simplified version with the complexified version, and you hang out in the creative tension that

Jackson-Pollock (1951), Woodshed Art Auctions

those two approaches provide. So, you shoot the methodological arrow in both directions—towards simplicity and towards complexity—and you let the juxtaposition of those, create new horizons of insight and understanding.

So, I think the overemphasis on simplicity or a single frame is very problematic. My training is in integrative meta theories, where we draw on lots of multiple, even contradictory sets of data and find ways to hold it all in creative tension without collapsing into one absolutism in favor of another absolutism.

JM: I know William James, one of the early pioneers in this field going back to the 19th century, wrote a book called *A Pluralistic Universe*, and I think his point is that every person, every conscious agent is, in effect, a universe unto themselves.

SEH: Absolutely. I mean, James has always been an inspiration for me ... is an important figure in the graduate program. I think he would look very favorably upon the super experienter research that we're working on, because he was so great at highlighting the importance of consciousness and the



range of experiences that a human being can have. So yeah, I love that you brought up James in this context.

JM: I also have the impression that if I were going to go about looking for super experiencers, I would be very interested in people who are already prominent as spiritual teachers of one form or another, because I find that their lives are typically very rich in this sort of thing. And because of the fact that they are already teaching other people, they have a following, they're good communicators in general, and they have a sense of how to integrate these often very weird experiences in a positive way.

SEH: Yeah, absolutely. One of the concepts that I've developed in exo studies is this notion of subtlimism. Subtlimism, like racism or sexism, is basically the disparaging of subtle realm experiences. So many of our traditions, spiritual and contemplative traditions, all we often tell the practitioner, ignore that, come back to the breath, ignore that, come back to the cushion ... There's this fear that it's going to be a distraction.

But when you look at the biographies of almost every spiritual teacher, it's filled with these experiences. They are having them left and right. So it's a very kind of odd thing that it just seems like, if you're on the spiritual path, if you're purifying the mind stream, if you're purifying the body, that you begin to activate and open up the subtle energies, and the subtle energy systems that give you perceptual capacity of these phenomenon, and yet, most of the contemplative traditions are very suspicious and worried about these phenomena, even though all their saints and masters and gurus seem to have them in spades. So I find this a bit disingenuous in a sense. I feel like we're at



a point where as humans, we can embrace those *siddhis* and those superpowers and those experiences. Of course, they can be a distraction. Everything can be a distraction. The ego can take anything it wants and turn it into a distraction. So I don't find the position that, "Oh, ignore it because of the distraction" that helpful. It's like, "No, let's explore it in a tantric sense. Let's use it as part of the path." Everything is part of the path. So I think you're right that a lot of spiritual teachers have these experiences and sometimes they're not as open and forthright about it as they might like to be because of kind of the cultural social taboo around this. They might emphasize certain kinds of experiences that are more associated with the tradition or lineage that they're representing.

JM: That's certainly the case even within spiritual circles, particularly I think, colored by the Victorian mentality. There is this sense, you know, we don't want to go there. I suppose ultimately spirituality is about engendering love and compassion in people. That needs to be, I think, central.

SEH: I've had several people share with me experiences like the following, like a traditional Buddhist meditator on the cushion doing Vipassana meditation. Then all of a sudden in his meditative experience, basically a great alien shows up standing next to the meditation cushion and he's going,





“My gosh, what's going on?” Then the Gray alien disappears, and then he goes to his teacher, and his teacher just says, “Ah, just ignore it.” Right? It's like a lot of the teachers actually aren't very well equipped to support their students with the full range of experiences they might have. They just have this mechanical response of like, “Oh, that's not part of our tradition. So don't engage it, ignore it, and just come back to the focus of the practice.” On the one hand, I can appreciate that kind of focus and clarity. But on the other hand, I feel we're at a point where it's doing a disservice, and that we need spiritual teachers who are more capable of supporting the wider range of anomalous experiences that their Sangha, practitioners, students, followers, are having. Because I've had many people share one version of that story with me. So I know it happens on a semi-frequent basis.

JM: Well, many traditions, particularly Tibetan Buddhism, suggest that these non-human entities, one could think of them as deities, have a role as guides and teachers.

SEH: Yeah, absolutely. I just taught a course on entity encounters, where we looked at ten major categories of entities. Even here, you find, yes, the Tibetans are very good at embracing a certain set of non-human intelligences. Often, the Bodhisattva's have a wrathful and a peaceful expression.

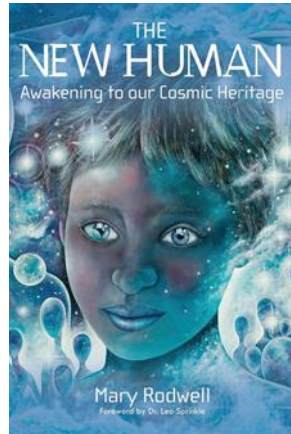
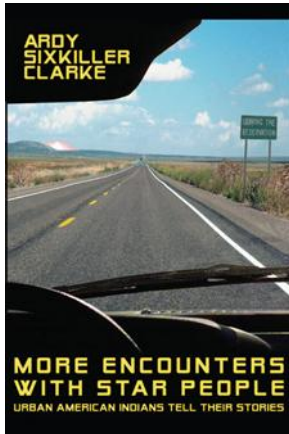
But then there's even some types of beings that are not included in that cosmology, that get left out. So even in the cosmologies that do a good job of including three or four or five major classes of non-human intelligences, they tend to still be leaving out or ignoring another set of five different types of beings.

I find this over and over again, where there's no kind of cosmology that really is inclusive to the full range of non-human intelligences that humans seem to be having regular contact with. We can learn a lot from Tibetan Buddhism. Likewise, with indigenous cosmologies, they include Sasquatch. You don't hear the Tibetan cosmology including Sasquatch so much, right? So there's different kinds of beings that are embraced and understood and normalized in various cosmologies. How do we navigate that? How do we do the comparative contrasting across these different kinds of spiritual systems to have a full view of the wild cosmos that we seem to be inhabiting alongside many other types of beings? You know, alternate human beings as well as non-human beings.

JM: You mentioned the Grays earlier. And of course, in the last, let's say, 50 years, there's been an enormous body, I'll call it folklore for the moment, having to do with the Grays. And it doesn't appear to me that one sees anything exactly like the Grays in earlier mythologies or traditions.

SEH: Yeah, the Grays are a very fascinating group of beings. I've talked to Peruvian shamans who lead ayahuasca ceremonies who have said to me that sometimes the Grays show up in the ayahuasca ceremony and they just tell them to go away. I've also had a Tibetan Rinpoche basically say the same thing during doing a big puja and ceremony.





They're just like, "Yeah, we know who they are, but we ignore them."

If you look at Aroy Sixkiller Clarke's work—she's an American Indian from Montana that's done a lot of ethnographic research with indigenous peoples in North America—she highlights through her interviews that the American Indians make a distinction between our star ancestors, their star ancestors, and the Grays. So, there are a lot of interesting data points that the Grays seem to be a very unique group of beings. If you look at psychedelic experiences, whether you're on DMT or even marijuana or ayahuasca, any number of the sacred medicines and otherwise, you have reports of Grays showing up across all those different modalities, across all those different types of psychedelic substances. So the Grays seem to be everywhere, right?

I think there's a way in which we have packaged up the Grays as kind of a cultural icon that represents aliens. I think it allows us to dismiss them in a way that isn't so helpful. I think there's a lot there that we should be paying attention to, they even get wrapped up with just the abductions—they're the ones driving the abduction process. That's another kind of dismissive move, right? I think the abduction phenomena is really important, and we need to look at it, it's very scary and overwhelming. Mary Rodwell suggests that there's over 100 different types of Grays. You have other

people who report that there dozens of different types of Gray. So even the label "Gray" might not be a very adequate or useful label because it is referring to lots of different groups. They just look similar and we just clump them together. So we need a much more dynamic cosmology to even start to try and navigate the complexities of what I suspect we're dealing with here.

JM: There's a Buddhist sutra. It goes something to the effect that form is emptiness, emptiness is form. It sort of suggests that conscious spiritual beings can take any kind of form. We could project, a single person can project an apparition of themselves in any form that they wish to imagine. There's no limit to my understanding.

SEH: There's a whole category of thought forms and *tulpas*, to refer to the Tibetan tradition, where individuals have developed powerful capacities of concentration. Or, if they're just in a very emotionally intense situation, that can be enough to create a wide range of thought forms, either a doppelganger of yourself, or another kind of person, or a being. This is a category of entity in and of itself, the thought forms. Part of what makes understanding the realms of non-human intelligences so difficult is [that] many of the beings, when they're interacting with us, they can choose to present in a certain way, or they can tap into our own image bank and draw out images that we're expecting. Then there's also our own projection. I refer to this dynamic in two ways, as mutual enactment, where they bring something to the table, we bring something to the table, and there's a dynamic participatory space that kind of mutually enacts them and us.

Now, that's not to reduce the ontological distinction between them and us, but it is to say that





Movie visual
"Contact"
(1997), starring
Jodie Foster

Sean Esbjörn-Hargens: Super Experiencers

because we're in a space that's informed by consciousness in a way that seems to be a little different than our material gross realm, that there's a dynamism at play. Then the other word I use in concept is *Kosplay* (with a K), where these beings are dressing up in images that they want to dress up and to present to us in a particular way. You have a great example in *Contact*, where Jodie Foster's on the beach ... she's encountering her father, and then she realizes, because the alien is explaining, that he's showing up as the father because that's an easier form to make contact with her in. So we're left to imagine that their true form is not that, right? It's something much different. So that's kind of an example of this *Kosplay*.

When we're dealing with the subtle realms, one of the moves that I see their traditions make, that I would call *subtlimism* is, when it comes to subtle beings, they point out the emptiness side of the Heart Sutra. You know, form is emptiness, like, "Oh, that's empty." They kind of dissolve it in emptiness. But as you pointed out, the Heart Sutra says it both ways. Form is emptiness, but emptiness is also form. So these are actual forms, these are actual beings. There's a range of autonomous to semi-autonomous. There's a lot of things for us to sort out.

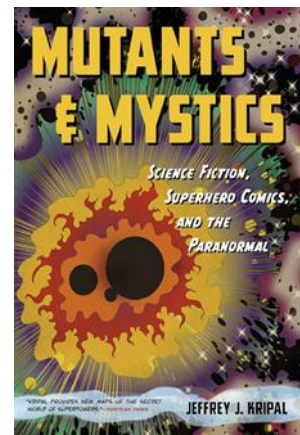
But just as you and I ultimately are the single original face, there's no difference between you and I at a certain point, if we zoom out enough

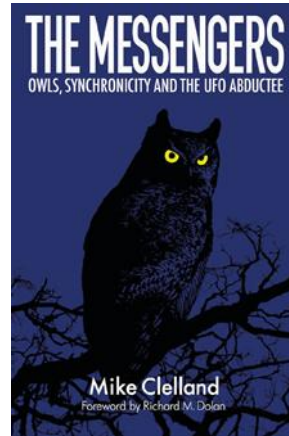
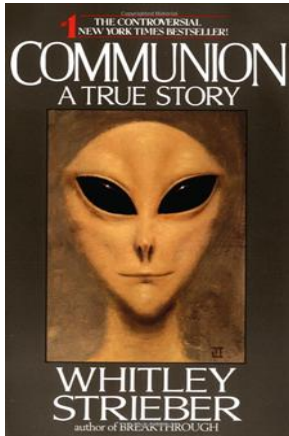
into non-dual awareness. But here you and I are sitting in different parts of the country, using technology to connect. So there is a way in which we're different, even though we're form, and we're different, even though there's another way we're the same and we're empty of our individual personalities. So likewise with these subtle beings and these non-human intelligences they are different, and they're the same. That's something that we have to keep sorting through because we have so much fear around them as existing ontologically distinct from us.

JM: It suggests to me, Sean, that anyone who wants to get engaged in this area that you're pioneering, noetic sciences, is going to need to be comfortable addressing paradoxes.

SEH: Yes, paradoxes are at the heart of it. One of the core concepts I'm developing in *exo-studies* is *doubleness*. This kind of draws on a notion that Jeffrey Kripal has written about in many of his books. *Doubleness* is how the phenomenon, whether we're talking about poltergeists or UAP encounters or angelic visitations, that there's often a *doubleness* to it, right?

Doubleness shows up across three major categories. At an individual level, it shows up as being both inside and outside at the same time. Or what's happening inside manifests outside, or what's happening outside manifests inside. The normal boundary between in-





side and outside becomes very porous, and it's not very helpful in trying to determine what one is experiencing.

The other is in relationship between self and other. That which seems other often gives a reason to believe that it's self, and then also you as self, sometimes start to feel like you're the other. It blurs the boundary between self and other. You sometimes have this with channelers, where channelers who have been channeling a certain being for a very long time, all of a sudden, after like 5, 10, 15 years, will then realize or share that the primary being that they challenge is actually themselves on another timeline in another dimension. That's an example of that being simultaneously being other and self. People who have encounters with ETs, or even Whitley Strieber's encounter with the female Gray-like being ... there are many points where he's describing it as being both very familiar and very foreign, both being himself and being something truly alien. So the self-other dynamic gets involved, and there's another kind of doubleness and paradox.

Then, the third major area is just around time and space, and the time dilations and the bilocation, and space and time gets all mixed up and turned around. So, the phenomena at its core seems to be paradoxical, regardless of what kind of anomalous experience you're talking about. Even Jacques Vallée talks about how the phenomena will erase

the evidence it provides, self-erasing evidence. So, again, it's this paradox, like it leaves evidence, but then often the evidence isn't worth much. It's confusing—yet there is evidence, but there's not evidence. This is part of why in the program that I run, there's a focus on integrative meta-theories, because integrative meta-theories—and Vernon Neppe is an example of one of those—is that you have to become more comfortable with ambiguity, uncertainty, and paradox. That's part of being in a “post-materialist frame,” it's getting out of the simplicity. It's getting into Pollock's brush, painting a wild, crazy picture, not just for the sake of adding complexity, but in a way that's anchored in the data.

You know, Kripal and Mike Clelland have made this point that the weirder it is, the truer it is. They're referring to conversations they've had with experiencers and super experiencers, where the first time they have the conversation, the individual shares a little bit about some weird encounter. Then, a week later, they share a little bit more. Then, a week later, it just gets stranger and stranger. Kripal says, when this happens, he really embraces the authenticity of the experience, because people are not wanting to be forthcoming with that level of weirdness. They're just slowly trusting you, and they're slowly revealing the next item behind the curtain. So, this whole idea that if it's weirder, it's truer is a paradox, because we have this idea that if it's weird, it's not true. I think a big part of this



is the need for integral awareness, integral models and maps that allow us to hold a lot of the paradoxical data points in a creative tension together.

JM: Let's talk for a moment about the California Institute of Human Science and the amazing work that they've done to take a program such as yours and have it approved by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) for academic credit.

SEH: Yeah, I'm really proud of this program. I'm really happy that CIHS, California Institute for Human Science, has been supporting me in this endeavor. I'm really excited that we have WASC approval. There's no program like this on the planet, it's really unique. We're partnering in various ways with the Institute of Noetic Science. CIHS has four major programs. My program is called *Integral Noetic Sciences*. It's got a master's and a PhD track. It started two years ago, right after you and I talked last, and was launched in spring of 2022. It's been growing. We have over 30 students now, which is super exciting, given it's just been around for two years. It weaves together many of the elements we've been talking about. It weaves together integrative meta-theories, contemplative science like studying the brain and meditators, esoteric studies, anomalous and noetic experiences, subtle energies, UAPs and consciousness, and non-human intelligences and entities.

The program outcomes, for students who come into the program, the five things we guarantee they're going to get by doing this accredited degree with us are: They're going to learn how to compare and contrast multiple comparative and esoteric traditions; they're going to focus on their own personal development; they're going to learn to do mixed methods research, which is using quali-

tative and quantitative methodologies. And because we're dealing with post-materialist realities, we're developing new innovative methods, drawing on feminist methodologies, indigenous methodologies, transpersonal methodologies, anomalous methodologies, because there are not many institutions that are trying to study the kinds of phenomena we're trying to study.

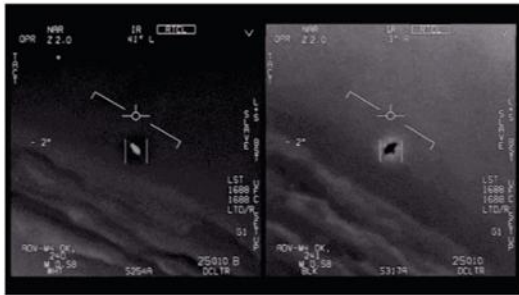
One of the things that really sets us apart from our sister school, the California Institute of Integral Studies, which is where I got my PhD, is our focus on mixed methods and post-materialist science. We really emphasize science, but not science in the traditional, reductive, secular sense, more transpersonal, holistic, interesting kinds of integrative science.

We have basically four kinds of concentrations that a student can choose to do in the program. If they're a master's or doctoral program either, they don't have to do a concentration, but they can if they want to focus their studies in a particular area. One is on wisdom design, that's using contemplative studies to help design organizations, educational programs, and so forth. One on anomalous studies, which is widely all the weird experiences that people have. Then there's a new concentration that we've just put together in UAP and consciousness studies.

The UAP topic has really exploded in the mainstream in the last four, five, six years since the 2017 *New York Times* article. There are many institutions that are getting involved with this topic, but none of them are focusing on the consciousness aspects. They tend to focus on the tech side. So I think that's one of the unique things that we're doing—we're really looking at how does consciousness individually and collectively interface with the study of UAPs and the various beings that are part of that



On the Trail of a Secret Pentagon U.F.O. Program



Videos show an encounter between a Navy Super Hornet and an unknown object. U.S. Department of Defense

By Ralph Blumenthal
Dec. 18, 2017

Our readers are plenty interested in unidentified flying objects. We know that from the huge response to our [front-page Sunday article](#) (published online just after noon on Saturday) revealing a secret Pentagon program to investigate U.F.O.s. The piece, by the [Pentagon](#) correspondent Helene Cooper, the author Leslie Kean and myself — a contributor to The Times after a 45-year staff career — has dominated the most emailed and most viewed lists since.

2017 New York Times article, on the Trail of a Secret Pentagon U.F.O. Program

experience space. Then students can also design their own concentration in collaboration with me. So, for instance, they could do something on subtle energy studies, or psychedelic studies, or contemplative science, or parapsychology ... though I will say we're in the process of putting together a program in collaboration with you. I'm hoping we're able to launch that as soon as possible. So, together, students in this program research the experiential, phenomenological, and transformative potential of these extraordinary anomalous experiences. They learn to investigate scientifically using mixed methods, as I said, the relationship between consciousness and the phenomenon, including subtle energies.



Then we also explore the philosophical, ethical, and ontological implications of this. Now, I know *ontological* is a big word. It basically means the position that these things are real in some meaningful way. Too often, I find in academic circles, or even religious, spiritual, contemplative circles, there tends to be a de-emphasis of the ontological aspects of these phenomena because it's too confronting to our mainstream worldview. We want to psychologize it, we want to pathologize it. So, in this program, we really are open to and take a hard look at the potential ontological realities that we're dealing with.

One thing that's really interesting about this program is students and faculty are experiencers. Some of us are super experiencers. We talk about that in our classes. We bring that into the conversation. We normalize it. I mean, it's amazing to be in a graduate WASC-accredited program and in a one and a half hour session have a student talk about a ghost they grew up with in their house. Another person talk about a pre-cognitive dream they had two weeks ago that just came true. Another one share a UFO experience they had 10 years ago that they've never shared with anyone. That's the kind of thing that happens in some of our classes. Student research is focused on intuition, parapsychology, ET contact, integral application to police departments, prison reform, spiritual entrepreneurship, and subtle energy research in nature.





We got a lot of great courses. So I'll stop there. That's probably more than enough. But hopefully it gives you and your listeners a sense of what an amazing opportunity is for people who are looking for a rigorous, systematic, accredited program, unlike anything on the planet that's dealing with anomalous phenomena, integral realities, and UAP and consciousness studies.

JM: I know that CIHS refers to their programs as being both online and in the classroom. I know you right now are in the state of Maine. CIHS is located in California near San Diego. How do you balance the in-person classroom studies with the online?

SEH: All of the courses in my program are online. We're in the process of building out more courses to be held in person on the campus in Encinitas, which is, as you pointed out, near San Diego. We were all on campus before the pandemic. With the pandemic, we were forced to push all the courses online. We got special permission from WASC to do that. Then, after the pandemic, we had to apply for permanent permission to continue in that mode, which we have received. We're rebuilding the on-campus offerings, but the majority of courses are offered online. As a result, an individual from anywhere in the world can participate and get an MA or a PhD in integral noetic sciences. You don't have to take on-campus courses if you don't want

to. But for those who live in the area or want to move to the area, we are increasing the number of courses that are offered on campus. We also have public programs that are offered on campus. We're going to continue to build out that aspect over time.

JM: Another question I'm sure many prospective students will have is: what are they going to do with a degree like this? It's not as if the corporate world is going to offer them high-paying jobs on a silver platter, or even the academic world.

SEH: A lot of individuals already are in a career that they're happy with, that's in the healing professions, or it's dealing with the kinds of topics that they would be learning about. They're doing it more to just increase their visibility, to be able to charge more for their workshops or their one-on-one sessions. We do have some students who are transitioning careers. With this degree, people either go into research, they go into education, or they go into business, like founding nonprofits or doing leadership in different business organizations.

So today in our conversation, we've kind of highlighted the anomalous studies and the UAP and conscious studies. There is a whole side to the program that focuses on the integrated meta-theories and the application of those meta-theories to prisons, to police departments, to business, to law, education, environment. So there's a lot of different applications that people are planning on doing with the degree or could do with it.

I'm always happy to chat with people to hear their individual kind of desires or trajectories to help them really assess if this degree would enable them to move forward in their professional trajectory in the way that they want. So I have a



lot of those conversations because, as you pointed out, it's not always obvious what you do with this degree. For some people, the topics are just so important. They just want to dive in and become a researcher and learn more about this. Then they kind of figure it out as they go. That's always another possibility.

JM: I recall many years ago, I had a similar conversation about a Rudolf Steiner-based college, Emerson College. At that point, they told me, we are not training people to go out and find a job in the job market. We are training people to go out and create jobs.

SEH: Right. Yeah, absolutely. I think that applies here as well. Though we do take the responsibility of helping our graduates find jobs, we take that very seriously. So it's important for us that the degree has professional relevance. That said, the point you just made coming out of Emerson College is also very true for many of our students. They're thought leaders and pioneers, and they're helping to create the next wave of jobs and professional activities. So we see a healthy dose of both of those scenarios in our situation.

JM: Well, Sean, it's been a pleasure talking to you. You're doing incredibly significant pioneering work. I don't know of anything comparable anywhere, certainly in the Western world and probably across the entire globe as well. So I commend you. I'm looking forward to further discussions with you as your work progresses.

SEH: Absolutely. Thank you for the conversation today and I look forward to our next conversation.



JM: Thank you for being with me, Sean, and with the *New Thinking Allowed* audience. And for those of you watching or listening, thank you for being with us, because you are the reason that we are here.

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Supporting Conversations on the Leading Edge of Knowledge
and Discovery with Psychologist Jeffrey Mishlove



More videos with Sean Esbjörn-Hargens



Realms of Non-Human Intelligence

New Thinking Allowed

<https://youtu.be/5PWliNQmpzg>



Nonduality Will Keep Evolving

Deep Transformation Podcast

<https://youtu.be/XiDNVxAhZ64>



Non-Human Intelligences

The Stoa

<https://youtu.be/4qQM6eT-O5Y>



Alien Abductee Brain Scans Reveal Gateway to a Hidden World

Danny Jones

<https://youtu.be/JUMNly8ODR0>



Journey into the field of Exo Studies

Edge of Mind

<https://youtu.be/YDAI49wcyKc>



**Meta-Models
(Ep. 7: Sean Esbjörn-Hargens)**

The Integral Stage

<https://youtu.be/a5WCRqVGELE>





www.dr DianeHennacy.com



Diane Hennacy Powell

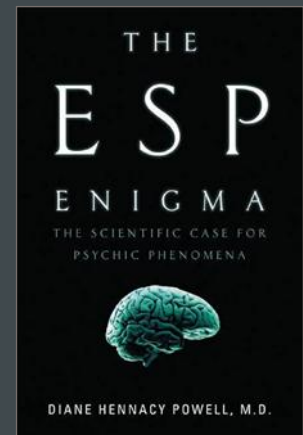
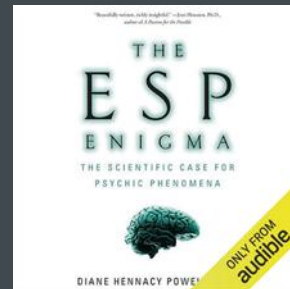
Diane Hennacy Powell, M.D., is a distinguished neuropsychiatrist, researcher, author, and public speaker with a diverse and impressive background in neuroscience and consciousness studies. She earned her medical degree from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, where she also completed postdoctoral training in neurology and psychiatry.

Powell's career has been marked by notable achievements and associations with prestigious institutions. She taught neuropsychiatry at Harvard Medical School and was a member of a consciousness think tank at the Salk Institute. Her research interests have evolved from traditional neuroscience to exploring extraordinary states of human consciousness and anomalous experiences.

As she delved deeply into science, it became increasingly apparent that our model for the brain and human consciousness was seriously flawed and incomplete. She chose to continue her research in the private sector and served as the Director of Research for the John E. Mack Institute (JEMI) after John, a former colleague at Harvard, passed in 2004. Her research interests included the neuroscience of extraordinary states of human consciousness and anomalous experiences. This is discussed in detail in her 2008

book *The ESP Enigma: A Scientific Case for Psychic Phenomena*, which examined scientific research into telepathy, precognition, and psychokinesis. Her current research focuses on autistic savants who exhibit telepathic and precognitive abilities, challenging conventional understanding of brain function and consciousness.

Powell is actively involved in various organizations, serving on the Board of Directors of the Jean Houston Foundation and the Scientific Advisory Board of the Forever Family Foundation. She is a co-founder of the International Association of Women for Change, and participated in the United Nations Conference on Women and Children in Beijing in 1995.





Original video interview on www.newthinkingallowed.com

Published to YouTube on July 21, 2024

PSYCHIC ABILITIES OF AUTISTIC SAVANTS

JM: Hello and welcome. I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. Today we'll be exploring the connection between parapsychological phenomena and the rare talents of autistic savants. My guest is Diane Hennacy Powell, a medical doctor trained in neurology and psychiatry. She is the author of *The ESP Enigma, A Scientific Case for Psychic Phenomena*. Diane is located on the West Coast in Oregon and now I'll switch over to the internet video. Welcome, Diane. It's a pleasure to be with you.

DHP: Thank you. It's an honor to be here.

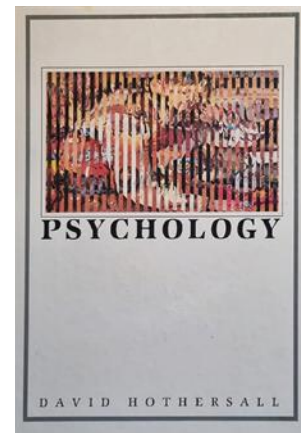
JM: You've been involved in parapsychological research for a couple of decades now. You've made some very important and innovative hypotheses. To my understanding, people approach this field for different reasons. Many people approach it because of a personal experience or because of spiritual interests, but I gather that your interest in the paranormal emerged from your strong interest in science.

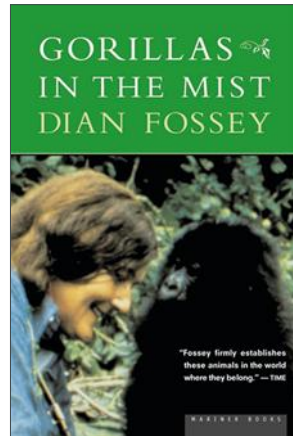
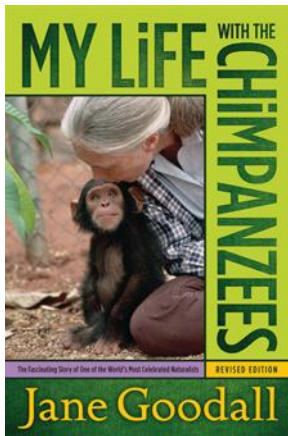
DHP: I have a love of science. I mean, I was not raised with any religion. In fact, I didn't even know that religion existed. My father was a scientist and he loved to educate. My mother was an educator as well. We started out at Hanford where my father was doing research on plutonium for the Atomic Energy Commission. Instead of toys, we had science kits. Also, he would bring me home animals

from a laboratory. On nature walks, I'd find animals. I was doing this combination of studying animal behavior, just meditating on how does a slug respond to whatever, or a snake, or a turtle, frog. I'm just looking at them. What I realized was that what I was really most interested at that point was actually animal behavior.

When I was in college, I actually spent time doing research with a comparative psychologist named David Hotherasall. When I say comparative psychology, what he taught us was that he would look at different species and he would describe what they could do, do different tests on them, and see how they responded to various behavioral conditioning paradigms, etc.

Then we would look at what we knew about the gross anatomy of the brain of those different species. We'd see these changes in the brain that correlated with changes in abilities. That made me really want to become a neuroscientist. I was thinking about becoming a comparative psychologist and was actually thinking about going to Africa and doing something like what Jane Goodall was doing. Then Dian Fossey. There were these reports coming out





about what was happening with Dian Fossey. They really didn't like her doing research on the gorillas. What happens is, that you have these women who were going to Africa and they were really effective in the field studies, because their vibe was such, for lack of a better word, that the animals accepted them. The problem was the communities they were in didn't, because you have these people that are making a living by poaching these animals, etc.

Anyway, I realized, okay, that's probably not a good thing for me to do. I found out how to go into neuroscience, but then I started thinking, "Well, I love animals so much, I don't want to do research on animals." As I got better and better at understanding animals and even being able to predict their behavior, sometimes I thought, "Well, humans are just more complex, but evolutionarily, we're still animals." This is what my thinking was: I'm not going to really understand human consciousness by studying animals. It's too big of a leap.

Then I became interested, because I was doing research, in electrophysiology. I was doing recording with microelectrodes in the axons of crayfish and seeing how they responded to various drugs that would block an ion channel. I didn't have problems with doing research on crayfish. That was a lot easier than doing research on some mammal.

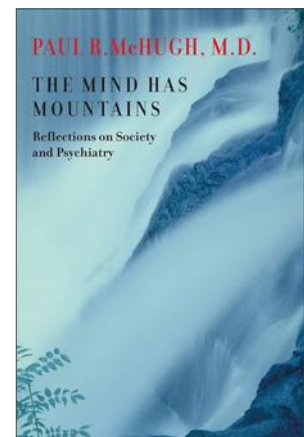
Anyway, when I got into doing this kind of recording research, I became aware of neurosurgeons who would do recordings from people's brains

while they were undergoing surgery. They would still be awake because the brain doesn't have any pain receptors.

I thought, "Oh, wow." Some of the stuff that was coming back was just mind blowing. They would stimulate a spot and then an entire memory would come back. I was like, "Wow, okay, yeah, this is what I want to do." So, I went to medical school with the intention of really becoming an academic neurosurgeon. The program that I trained in was at Johns Hopkins where I went to medical school.

The chairman of the Department of Psychiatry, Paul McHugh, had been a neurologist before he became a psychiatrist. He had trained in psychiatry at the Maudsley in London and the Institute of Psychiatry there. His approach to psychiatry was just exactly what I was looking for. It was this approach where you're really looking at behavior, cognition, emotions, all of these different aspects of consciousness. You're then trying to correlate it with the brain and what you know about the brain.

Neuroimaging was just starting. I was like, "Okay, I'm going to become a neuropsychiatrist like Paul McHugh."





That's my background. Then, taking it a step further, how I got into parapsychology was that I had this belief that if you're going to have a model ... because I really was wanting to create some theory, some model for understanding these big questions. I didn't have any prayer that I would come up with a model. It's like the goal is you're striving towards something. This is my effort. This is my best effort. That's how science advances.

I thought, you can't throw out phenomena. I was really trained as a phenomenologist.

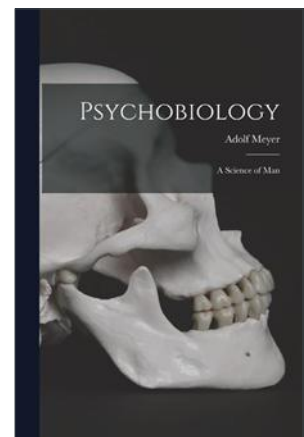
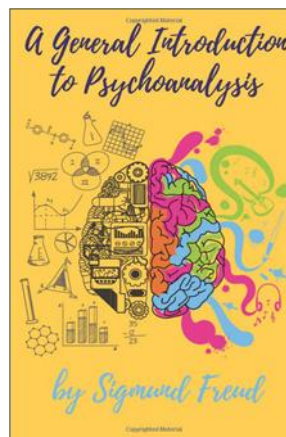
A lot of people, when they think of psychiatry, they think of Sigmund Freud and a lot of the programs at the time that I trained were still psychoanalytic. But, what was unique about Johns Hopkins was that the psychiatry, that Paul McHugh brought in, was that of Adolf Meyer. Adolf Meyer had this approach to psychiatry where you really looked at the human being as a biological. They have a biological component to them, they have a social component to them, they have a personal psychological component to them, and they have a spiritual component to them.

When people come to you and they are having problems, your first job is to say: which one of those realms is this in? Then the treatment gets chosen based on which realm it's in. If it's a spiritual crisis, you don't put somebody on an antipsychotic. But if their brain has syphilis and they're having all of these things, you put them on the treatment you

would use for syphilis, an antibiotic. That was how I was trained. It was really, to me, a lot of the psychiatry of the future. Adolf Meyer was really ahead of his time.

What happened is that while I was practicing, while I was at Harvard as a neuropsychiatrist, I'm doing a consultation on a patient, and this patient did a reading on me. She had been admitted the night before for a suspected heart attack. She wanted to leave the hospital against medical advice. If the staff think that the person really is not coherent enough to really show sound judgment to make that kind of decision, they bring in a psychiatrist to be the one who just documents that, and then they can proceed forward. I'm somebody who cares about people's rights. I care. My approach to things is to try to just reason with somebody ... it doesn't matter if they're reporting all kinds of things that show that they're not living in the same reality as me. It's just my natural approach to treat them with respect and to try to gain their cooperation rather than use the heavy hand.

I went in to see this woman, and she was half Native American, half African American, and very tall, at least six foot, maybe six foot one, just towered over me. She said to me that she was seeing



ghosts, and she was psychic, and she knew the tests were going to come back normal—and she wanted to go home. Most psychiatrists really would have just said, “Okay, she’s seeing ghosts. She says she’s psychic. This is obviously someone who’s not using her good judgments,” and they would have just signed the paperwork and gone away. For me, I thought, “Well, I’ll sit down with her.” I said, “Well, when you say you’re psychic, what do you mean?”

She says, “Oh, well, I don’t work as a psychic. It’s just something I share with family and friends. It’s not something I do for work.” She said, “I’m actually a cleaning lady in some facility across town.” I said, “Well, you’ve been psychic for how long now?” She said, “I’ve been psychic since birth. I was born with the caul over my face,” which I knew was something that basically is like the afterbirth. Some of it is blocking their ability to breathe and oftentimes they develop insufficient oxygen and it can cause brain damage. It certainly can damage the hippocampi, which are very metabolically active. Anyway, I’m thinking, “Okay, this woman’s had some brain damage. She was born with a caul on her head,” and she looks at me and then she goes, “You’ve got this white light over you, and I’m getting a reading about you. Do you mind if I tell you what I’m seeing?” I said, “Oh, yeah, sure, sure.”

At this point, I had never heard of auras. I mean, there’s somebody saying white light. This is very foreign territory to me, but it’s like you roll with it, because I was used to talking to people who were in their mind somewhere else. That’s one of the things when you’re talking with somebody who has schizophrenia, let’s say. I mean, it’s like talking with somebody who’s on an LSD trip. It’s very, very similar in certain ways and I always found it fascinating to kind of understand what it was they’re experiencing. It’s almost like doing

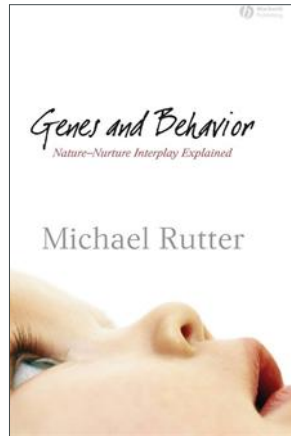
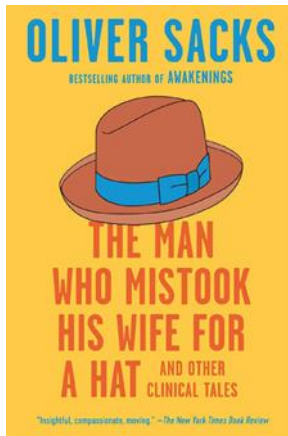
dream analysis when you’re with somebody who’s reporting this reality that’s totally different and it’s like you’ve entered into their dream.

I said, “Yeah, sure, tell me.” She goes, “Well, first of all, your husband’s a chemist,” and that is true. My husband he was a medical doctor, but he was also a PhD biochemist. She said, “And he’s applying for a job in two different cities right now,” which was exactly true. That very week he was applying for a postdoc in biochemistry in San Diego and one back at Johns Hopkins. That got my attention. Then she said, “Oh, in his heart of hearts he wants to go to one place, but you’re actually going to end up at the other place.” I said to her ... now she really had my curiosity. I knew that in his heart, that my husband wanted to go back to Hopkins. I mean, he thought of California as sort of the land of “the fruits and nuts,” as he would put it. He was very much a diehard East Coast nurse, 13th generation Baltimorean, was even born at Johns Hopkins and had an uncle who was on faculty there years ago. He wanted to go back to Hopkins. She said, “You go ahead and end up at the other one.” Then I thought, “Hmm, okay, are we going to end up in San Diego?”

“Well,” I said, “Can you be more specific?” She goes, “Well, name some cities and I’ll tell you which one.” So I named like 10 different cities. Then she said, “San Diego, that’s where you’ll end up. And you’ll leave psychiatry to write books, and you’ll be very successful, and you’ll only have one child, a daughter.” I’m like, “Okay.”

I mean, since then, I have left psychiatry to write, and I only did have one child, a daughter. I was very successful in San Diego. So now I had to deal with this phenomenon that here was somebody who ... I mean, to me, there was no explanation other than that she was reading my mind.





JM: Well, and reading the future as well.

DHP: And reading the future. The first thing is that it was like reading my mind, okay. I had met a mentalist, when I was a teenager that I had just sort of dismissed, because a friend of mine would travel with the circus and this mentalist, when he came into town, he did this trick where he said, "Pick a book off that shelf and open it to any page and I'll read it for you." And he was standing at the other end of the room and was just reading it word for word as I was reading it. I asked him, "How did you do that?" He did it with more than one book. He said, "Oh, I'm a magician. I don't reveal my tricks. It's just magic." So, no explanation there, but I mean, I'm just a teenager. I didn't make much of it.

But it wasn't until the future happened, that I then look back at what this woman had said, such that I could say, "Oh my gosh, you also read the future too. How is that possible?" So that's how I got into parapsychology.

JM: Well, at some point in your career, you took an interest in autistic savants.

DHP: Yes, I became very interested in autistic savants pretty early on. Part of that is because it really actually goes back to 1986 when I ... here I am, somebody who is a neuropsychiatrist, behavioral neurologist. So when Oliver Sacks came out with

his book that gave an account of these twins with autism, he came to Johns Hopkins to give a talk and I met him. I was like, "This is, this is, this is it. This is so similar to ESP. I wonder if they're the same thing?"

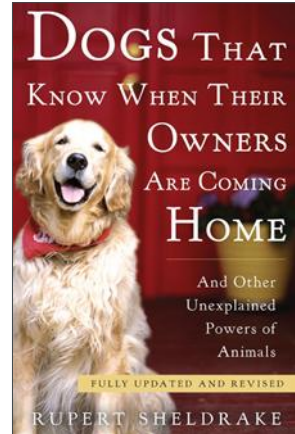
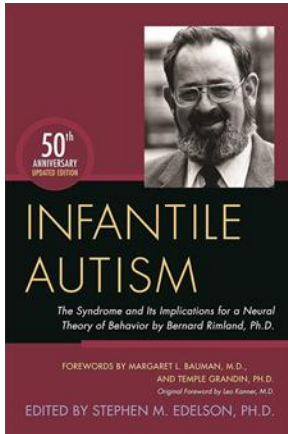
So, in 1987 I went to England and was at the Maudsley and the Institute of Psychiatry, working with Sir Michael Rutter before he was knighted for his work on autism, and evaluating children with developmental disorders. And I just became really, really fascinated with autism because it was such a mystery. Unfortunately for somebody who's interested in it, it was extremely rare. When I went back to the States and took a position at Harvard, I was told, "Oh, you can't do research on autism. There just isn't enough of it." That was something that Sir Michael Rutter told me before I left. Because, there I was with him for six months, and I probably only saw a total of about eight cases of autism. He was getting referrals from all around the world.

JM: Now are we talking about autism or autistic savants?

DHP: We're talking about autism, that was autism itself. Autism back then was only about one in 10,000 children. Now it's between one in 30 and one in 40. So the incidence has increased over the course of my career. It increased enough that there started being more. There are not only more people with autism, but there were more people who were savants, because about 10% of people with autism can have some savant skill.

Then I discovered the work of Bernard Rimland, who was a psychologist who had a son with autism. He studied thousands of autistic children. What he said was, that a very small percentage of them had ESP. He gave accounts of stories of





children who, for example, similar to Rupert Sheldrake's work, would always know when the parent is coming to pick them up. And even though the parent wasn't regular when they picked them up, they just started to behave differently. Or, [they] had abilities in having a dream of the death of somebody who then dies the next day. That sort of thing. I thought, "Understanding them would really help, not only because it would help parapsychology." It's not just because I thought that they—if you find one of these savants—would exhibit it to a significant degree, but on a reliable basis. That's one of the things that I really felt was needed, that somebody who is ... it's just like the synesthete who sees colors around numbers. I mean, it's an automatic thing. They can't help it. So, somebody who literally lives in that world rather than it being something that they have to bring on themselves.

JM: And so you actually began to research that question.

DHP: Yes, yes, yes. After my book, *The ESP Enigma*, came out, I was invited to go to India by a woman named Mithili Shari. She was someone who had a position with the government of India. She had a master's degree and she was working with autistic children. She read my book on ESP and invited me to come over and do a symposium with her and also to evaluate some of the savants that she had

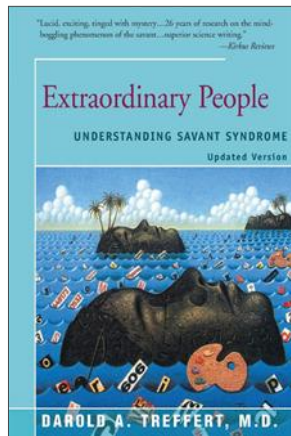
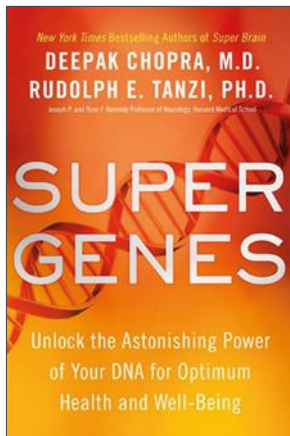
been working with. So I went over to India and saw these children who had these stories of precognition. But I didn't really know how I would test that when I was over there for such a short period of time. But I made note of that. I also discovered that all of the parents reported that they were telepathic.

And I thought, that's something that you can demonstrate in real time. It's really hard to demonstrate some of these things—like children having knowledge of languages that they weren't exposed to. Even though there are these accounts like that, like Ramses who knew eight languages, by the time he was four years old he was giving the alphabets of eight different languages. But I have to trust the mother's narrative that he wasn't just while she was doing something else on the computer. Even though that's remarkable and that's a savant skill, it doesn't fall into the parapsychological. I knew that skeptics are so critical of what's already really good data that's out there, that I thought, "No, I need something that nobody can criticize." I started thinking about telepathy and I thought, "Okay, that is something." If more of them share that in common, and if that's something that I can then demonstrate just having cameras and, ideally two separate rooms—just showing what's going on and demonstrate it over and over again—then it's that kind of thing that might just shift the needle a little bit.

JM: I gather, though, that along the way you came to see that it's very difficult to control the experimental situation to the extent that's going to satisfy a skeptic. In fact, they're never satisfied.

DHP: Yes. I mean, it is very hard to satisfy them. I've done these experiments where virtually every-





body who witnesses them is blown away. I mean, they walk away, convinced that something's going on. Deepak Chopra witnessed one of my experiments, and he was so blown away, he left without his jacket and his backpack. We had to send somebody with him to New York to give it to him.

JM: Can you give an example of the kinds of things you witnessed in these tests?

DHP: The first savant that I really studied pretty intensively was a girl named Haley. What's remarkable about her is that her father is a medical doctor, and when he found out about this ability, it was like, "Oh gosh, this goes against anything that I was trained to believe." He lived in Wisconsin and so he was familiar with Darold Treffert's work on savants and contacted Darold, and also found out about my work and contacted me. So, both of us evaluated her. I did the controlled experiments, and put a barrier between her and the therapist, and had cameras in the room to document it. What we did was, we'd have the therapist look at a picture card or look at a random six-digit number, and ask Haley to type it out. She was doing it, typing on an iPad that's a talker, that has an electronic voice that comes out. She was doing that initially, but then, with all the cameras that arrived and the barrier between her and the therapist—it's hard to impose that on a child who's autistic, who has difficulty with change

or has a tendency to get overstimulated, and expect that you can just do business as usual. So, she had to revert back to using the sensor board where she would use a pencil and point into the letters and into the numbers. So, I was generating these random six-digit numbers. And then, because she was insulted if all you did was ask her to just spit back what the numbers were—this is the feedback I was told by the therapist—I would turn it into a mathematical equation, and so I'd say, "Okay, I want you to give me the first six-digit number, the second six-digit number, then multiply them, and then give me what that answer is." I was able to get, basically, [that] out of 167 numbers that were in that kind of a format, she only made seven mistakes, and each one of those she corrected in the second go-around, meaning that she made a mistake and then sort of ..., you know, such profound accuracy.

JM: That's very impressive, obviously. It's certainly worth looking into more deeply. Now, I understand that when we're talking about these autistic savants, like Haley, who's using some sort of a typewriter to communicate with, that she's non-verbal.

DHP: That's right. So, what I've found is, that with the exception of Ramses, who was verbal ... there's a video of me and Ramses doing an experiment that went viral, it's had over nine million views. That was nine years ago, and he was able to say in a very articulate way what the number was. But I'd say with that exception, the ones that seem to be the most telepathic are the ones that are non-verbal. And I would also say that Ramses since has either lost that ability or, has lost that connection with his mother, because he's a teenager now. So, right now, the only ones that I'm working with are the non-verbals.



And I have a theory about why that might be, and every one of them is a child that was developing normally and then regressed. So, the non-verbals are usually children that were just starting to acquire some language and then something happens that causes inflammation in their brain, that then causes them to regress. One of the things a lot of people don't realize is, that the developmental process in the brain is like a sculpting process. During the first several years, the first four years in particular in life, while you're learning a skill, certain synapses are being reinforced and other ones are being let go, because there's a redundancy there that needs to be removed. The cells that do that in the brain are similar to macrophages and they're stimulated by the same thing that macrophages are stimulated by. They can get overly aggressive in their pruning process. These children who are developing language to the point where they've actually been acquiring the ability to understand language, but they haven't developed the ability yet to be very articulate, that's where their language development gets arrested. What we've discovered about these children is, that their understanding of language, their receptive language, is still intact in many of them. It's just the expressive language that got damaged during that insult, whatever it was.

If you think about it, the acquisition of language in a child is such a remarkable miracle, because we haven't always been engaged in picture books and spending intensive time pointing to things and having them say it back to us—that's relatively new in our cultural evolution for us to be doing that sort of thing. Yet, we've been acquiring language for a long time. There's this way in which somehow this small child is able to know when it's hearing these sounds what it's even referring



to, able to sort of differentiate a lot of signal from noise. If you've ever studied another language, you can sort of appreciate how difficult that really is.

It came to me that ... what if we're all telepathic at birth, we all have a shared consciousness with the mother at birth, that is something that is sort of described by a lot of mothers, myself included, I would anticipate before my child would cry. I mean, I just sort of instinctively, if she was in another room, would know if something was going on with her.

So, you have this sort of connection that then, once language develops, that sort of more primary communication tool goes underground or disappears. But I think it probably just goes underground. I think that it makes sense that having a shared consciousness would assist in acquiring language.

JM: I think one of the points that you've made is that for the non-verbal children, the ability to cultivate telepathy becomes a survival skill when they don't have other means of communication. They need to hone that ability and therefore they do.

DHP: Absolutely. So, it doesn't go away and because it's their only way of communicating, they become even better at it. Yet, at the same time, they're still acquiring language. So, that's one of the things that blows these parents away when their child starts





acquiring the ability to spell and to communicate that way. It blows them away that it's like they're still on track. It's not like this 14-year-old is writing the way that a five-year-old would or a six or seven-year-old. No, they're writing like a 14-year-old because that's still evolving. If we look at the brain, the only thing that what was damaged was the Broca's area, the area that is involved in the actual control of the muscles that are required for expression of language.

JM: As a neuroscientist, I think it's rather interesting that, to my knowledge, you signed a declaration from the Association for the Advancement of Post-material Sciences in which you're saying we have to go beyond the materialistic model of explaining everything in science. Particularly, this would be true with regard to parapsychological phenomena. So, you started your career by studying the brain, but I gather you've come to see that consciousness does not necessarily limit itself to the brain.

DHP: Yes. I really have done a 180 degree on how I think about this. I was steeped in the materialist model as you could be. To me, I had all of these experiences of, "Oh, you have damage to this part of the brain, you lose this skill. It gets expressed in the behavior a certain way." When you see that over and over and over again, that reinforces the idea that the brain is somehow creating all of this. Then,

when I started studying parapsychology, doing the research for my book, *The ESP Enigma*, and then started thinking about what I knew as a phenomenologist, I started thinking, "Wow, okay." I'd heard of out-of-body experiences and near-death experiences and did some research into them. How can we explain that? Because this model really needs to explain everything.

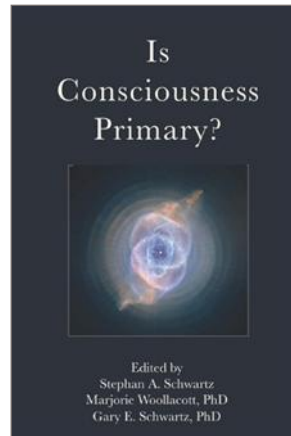
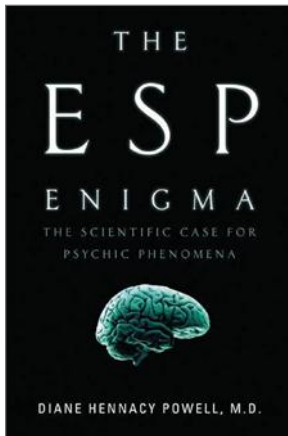
So, I looked at all of the phenomena within parapsychology, whether it's remote viewing or precognition or telepathy. I looked at all of it, saying all of that needs to be explained, as well as the other anomalies. It has to explain savants skills; it has to explain non-locality; it has to explain all of these things. That is what eventually led me to abandoning the materialist model. It doesn't explain anything. All it does is deny us any kind of credibility to these phenomena. That's all it does. It's the filtering system.

JM: Even today, I think it's fair to say, in spite of mountains of evidence, most people in the neuroscience community treat that evidence as if it didn't exist at all.

DHP: It creates cognitive dissonance. I really see how difficult it is for people to switch gears. It's like belief confirmation. Whatever it is you believe, it gets confirmed over and over and over again. You can have a certain blindness to anything that goes against it. I think maybe that's some kind of survival instinct in humans that keeps them in this kind of more tunnel vision after a certain point.

I see that a lot of people don't handle cognitive dissonance. That's one of the reasons why I haven't spent, except for these autistic savants, as much of my time doing experimental work as I have spent time trying to develop a theory for understanding





how these things are possible. I think that's the bridge that can help with this cognitive dissonance.

After I wrote *The ESP Enigma*, I've connected with people who were, for example, alumni of Johns Hopkins medical doctors, just like me. After reading my book, it gave them permission to believe in these things because it puts all of this into a scientific language.

JM: I gather from our conversations earlier that the medical community didn't exactly embrace your work with open arms.

DHP: It was mixed. What happened was that my book was favorably reviewed and it was actually purchased. The major reviewers, who recommend it, like Kirkus, publish the review lists that librarians look at to decide what books to purchase that year. My book is 16 years old now, it went into a lot of university libraries and city libraries, in addition to having people that read it and read a review of it in my alumni magazine from Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. They read the review and they're like, "Oh, okay, I'll get the book and read it." It opened a number of minds.

I thought, great, this is achieving what I want it to do. Because I was naive then. I thought, "Oh, the problem is people just haven't really looked into this." So many people are not neuroscientists, so they don't really understand how insufficient

the model is. They just don't think about it, they just take it as a fact. But I having done all kinds of approaches within neuroscience that I really understood its limitations and I even understood the limitations of medical scientists who were pursuing this. Because their approach just isn't going to explain these other phenomena. That's basically how it was being received.

Then it was my medical board that had problems with it. First of all, the members of the medical board they're appointees by the governor. They weren't psychiatrists. You can be from any specialty within medicine to be on the medical board. One was like a surgeon, another was a gastroenterologist, et cetera. I mean, their exposure to psychiatry, let alone neuroscience, is so minimal. And they hear that a psychiatrist, who's the one who judges whether people are sane or not, is out there, and they'd written a book on ESP giving it some kind of legitimacy. It was like a slam dunk for them that I was crazy without even reading the book.

JM: We plan to do a completely separate interview on the drama that ensued after the medical board made that decision. I think it's a very important case in terms of understanding the social psychology surrounding parapsychological phenomenon. So I would encourage our viewers to stay tuned for that. It'll probably be released in a couple of weeks.



In the meantime, I certainly want to encourage our viewers to take a look at your book, *The ESP Enigma*. It's a masterpiece.

DHP: Thank you.

JM: It truly is. Would it be fair to say, Diane, that at this point in your evolution you would agree that consciousness is primary rather than physical matter?

DHP: Absolutely. The first time that I realized that is actually the result of going to this meeting that was with Gary Schwartz and Marjorie Woollacott and other people who were founding AAPS¹. In preparation for that, one of the things that Gary asked was, "I want to know everybody's opinion. Is consciousness primary? I thought, primary and fundamental." He just posed it as a question. It never occurred to me to think of it that way. That was my initial reaction. It was like, "Gee, I never thought of it." And so because that was the question posed, I did it as a thought experiment. In doing it as a thought experiment, I was like, "Holy cow."

It was like somebody giving you permission when you do that test, where they say, well, con-

nect all of these dots and don't have your pencil leave the paper. Most people can't do it if they're thinking, "Well, I can't have the line go way out here and then come back." So they can't do it. But once you're given permission, you could take it to the end of the room if you want. That's what you need to do to connect those dots all of a sudden. That's the permission he gave me in asking me if consciousness could be primary because I thought that really would explain everything.

JM: Well, what an important note to close on. I know there's much more to be said and I expect that you and I will be able to do a couple more interviews to probe these questions more deeply. But for now, Diane, I want to thank you deeply for being with me today. I think your work is very important. I know our viewers are going to be fascinated by your insights. So thank you for taking the time to be with me and the New Thinking Allowed audience today.

DHP: Thank you very much. Pleasure's mine.

JM: And for those of you watching or listening, thank you for being with us because you are the reason that we are here.

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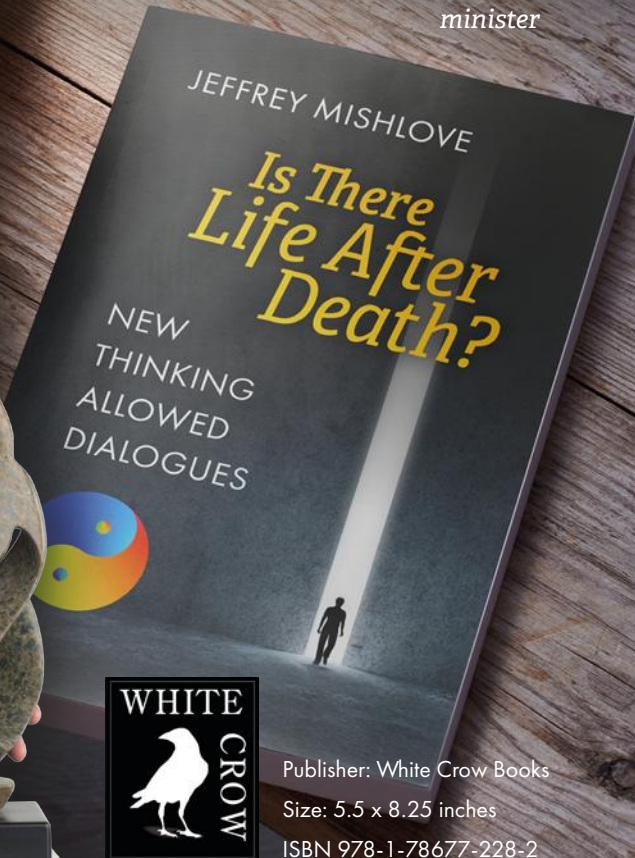
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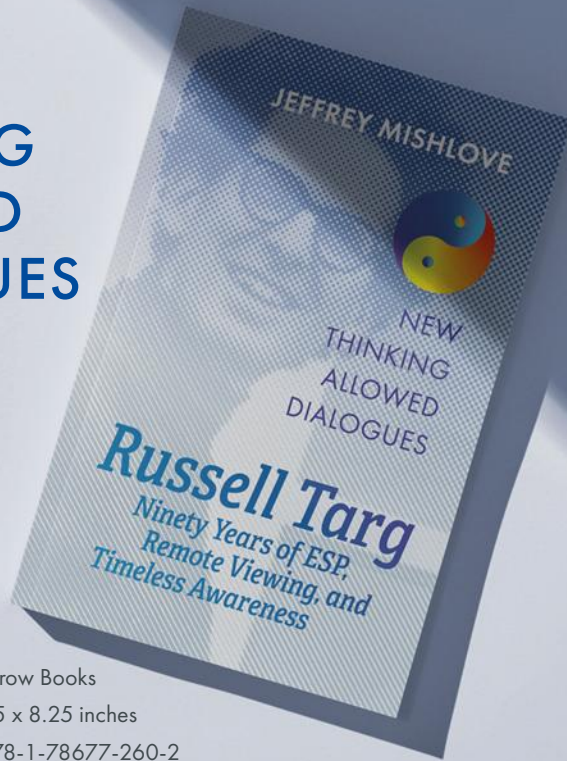


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NEW THINKING ALLOWED DIALOGUES BOOK 2



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“Russell Targ is a parapsychological genius. He is one of the most successful and insightful parapsychologists in history. He is a man of magic! I am proud to call him my friend; and I am delighted to be able to share with readers fifteen of my conversations with this great soul.”

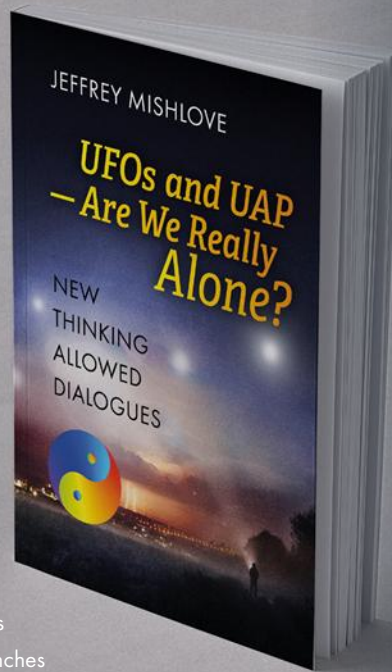
—Jeffrey Mishlove, PhD



NEW THINKING ALLOWED DIALOGUES BOOK 3



White Crow Books
Size: 5.5 x 8.25 inches
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In this anthology titled *UFOs and UAP: Are we Really Alone?* Jeffrey Mishlove explores the increasingly compelling subject of Unidentified Flying Objects, or as it's now termed by NASA, “Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena.” The book features scientists, historians, and researchers in the genre both past and present, such as Jacques Vallée, Nick Cook, Ralph Blumenthal, John E. Mack, Charles Upton, Whitley Strieber, Daz Smith, Jeffrey Kripal, Greg Bishop, Daniel Sheehan, and a Preface by Bob Davis, Ph.D.





www.gary-lachman.com



Gary Lachman

Gary J. Lachman, born in 1955, is an American writer and musician who has made significant contributions to both the literary and music worlds. His career spans several decades and encompasses diverse fields of interest.

Lachman first gained prominence in the mid-1970s as a founding member and bass guitarist for the rock band *Blondie*, performing under the stage name Gary Valentine. He wrote several of the band's early hits. In 2006, Lachman was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as a member of Blondie.

After leaving his music career in 1982, Gary Lachman pursued his passion for writing and philosophy. He earned a philosophy degree from California State University, Los Angeles, and briefly entered a doctoral program in English literature. In 1996, Lachman moved to London and became a full-time writer.

Lachman has authored over 20 books on topics ranging from the evolution of consciousness to literary suicides, popular culture and the history of the occult. He has written a rock and roll memoir of the 1970s, biographies of Aleister Crowley, Rudolf Steiner, C. G. Jung, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Emanuel Swedenborg, P.D. Ouspensky, and Colin Wilson, histories of Hermeticism and the Western

Inner Tradition, studies in existentialism and the philosophy of consciousness, and about the influence of esotericism on politics and society.

Lachman is an adjunct professor of Transformative Studies at the California Institute of Integral Studies. He lectures regularly in the UK, US, and Europe, and his work has been translated into a dozen languages.

He regularly contributes to various journals in the US, UK, and Europe, including *Fortean Times*, *Quest*, *Strange Attractor*, *Fenris Wolf*, and his work has appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement*, *Times Educational Supplement*, *Guardian*, *Independent on Sunday*, *Sunday Times*, *Mojo*, *Gnosis* and other publications. Lachman has also appeared in several documentaries and on *BBC Radio*. Throughout his career, Lachman has established himself as a respected voice in the fields of consciousness studies, Western esotericism, and cultural history. His work continues to influence and educate readers worldwide, with his books translated into numerous languages.





Original video interview on www.newthinkingallowed.com

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MAURICE NICOLL: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF GURDJIEFF AND OUSPENSKY'S FOURTH WAY

JM: Hello and welcome. I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. Our topic today is Maurice Nicoll and the psychology of the *Fourth Way* teachings of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky. My guest is Gary Lachman, who is one of the world's foremost historians of esoteric culture. Additionally, he is formerly a songwriter and bass guitarist for the rock band *Blondie*. He's been interviewed a dozen times previously on *New Thinking Allowed* on topics including Rudolf Steiner, Madame Blavatsky, Emmanuel Swedenborg, P.D. Ouspensky, Colin Wilson, Aleister Crowley, Hermeticism, Carl Jung, Chaos Magic, and Russian Mysticism. His newest book is *Maurice Nicoll: Forgotten Teacher of the Fourth Way*. Gary lives in England. Welcome, Gary. It's a pleasure to be with you once again.

GL: Same here, Jeffrey. It's always a pleasure to be on your show.

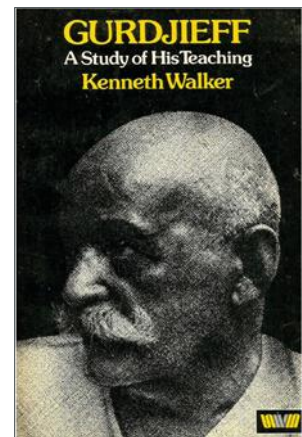
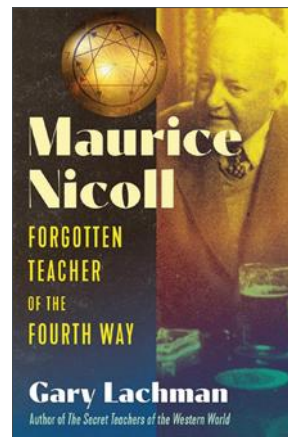
JM: I note that this is our 15th interview. We've covered a lot of ground in the previous 14 going over esoteric culture. I think today will be a deep dive into the teachings of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky and the whole movement that surrounds what are known as the *Fourth Way* teachings.

I guess a good starting point would be to define what is meant by the *Fourth Way*?

GL: Well, the *Fourth Way* is a term that Gurdjieff told Ouspensky could be used for the system

that he was being taught. The idea was that there's three traditional ways. It's ways of spiritual development. It's ways of developing your inner world and your spiritual life. One way is the way of the *fakir*, which is the physical, the body. So the fellow who lies on beds of nails or stands in one position for ages or somebody today who would spend an inordinate amount of time at the gym maybe or in *yoga* class in some *asana*. They're developing their body, developing the physical way of transcending their everyday consciousness. Then you have the way of the monk, which is the emotional way, the way of reverence and love towards some divine figure, some deity. I mentioned in the book *Ramakrishna*, who would go into a faint of ecstasy just at the very mention of the name of *Kali*, the great mother goddess.

He was a devotee. So that's the development of the emotions. Then there's the way of the *yogi*,

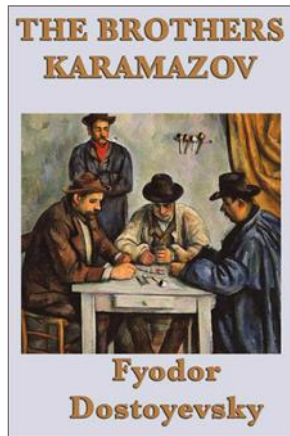


which is *dhyana*, the way of concentration of the mind, controlling the thoughts and focusing your attention and concentration on a single item, so on and so on. But each of those

things, even though each one of them can get you some way along the way towards spiritual development, they have their drawbacks as well. So while the *fakir* is able to control his body, he's not doing that well with his emotions or his mind. The monk who is able to trigger this great emotional kind of ecstasy has very little control over the body and is usually not a very good thinker. Then the one who can control the mind, and this is an endemic problem, occupational hazard with intellectuals, they have no idea what to do with their body and are completely at a loss of their emotions.

So, each of those ways, even though they have some advantages, they have disadvantages. But Gurdjieff stated that his system, which he was teaching Ouspensky in Russia during the early to mid-1910s (1913–1919), was a method in which one worked on all aspects of oneself simultaneously. So you worked at the body, the mind, and the emotions at the same time. Just parenthetically, you can see even earlier than that in Dostoevsky's great novel *The Brothers Karamazov*, where the three brothers are introduced.

One of them is the emotional brother, one of them is the physical brother, and one of them is the mental. So, the whole idea of this kind of triad of different ways and types predates Gurdjieff; you can even find it in Plato. But the idea in the *Fourth way* was this, you could work on all of those together. The other additional advantage of



the *Fourth Way* is that you didn't have to go to a monastery or an *ashram* or a *zendo* to do it. You do it in your everyday life. Gurdjieff told Ouspensky, the very conditions you find yourself in, those you want to escape, are the best ones for you to work within.

JM: You point out an interesting paradox in your book that, according to the philosophy of the *Fourth Way*, the problems to be worked through are the natural ones that occur in the normal course of a normal human lifetime. You don't need any *ashram*, you don't need anything special. But then when one looks at the various *Fourth Way* groups, it seems as if the *Fourth Way* teachers were creating all sorts of special, unnatural conditions for their students.

GL: Yeah, there's something I sort of jokingly refer to as 'institute-itis,' that they have. It comes from Gurdjieff, who famously established his *Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man* in Fontainebleau, France, in the early 1920s. This was in this old chateau, which was run down. Basically, Ouspensky was already in London. This is how Maurice Nicoll, who I've written the book about, finds out about all this stuff, because he goes to one of Ouspensky's lectures. Then, when word spread that Gurdjieff was in France with his institute, many people crossed the channel to see him. Nicoll





goes, Orage goes, many, many others go to spend time at the institute. The whole idea there is that you sped up, you increased and sped up what you would normally encounter in life, which is confusion and problems and inconvenience.

But Gurdjieff was a master at creating artificial inconvenience or artificial chaos. One of the things he did was to put people together whom he knew would not get along. Their temperaments were different, so they would grate on each other. Or he would forbid you to smoke, or he would forbid you to read, or he would do something in which you were pulled out of your ordinary conditions in which to sort of face yourself. But then you went back. The whole idea was you went through. It was kind of like boot camp or commando training. You went through this process and then returned to life because the whole idea was to be awake; that is, the goal was to awaken. If you're only awake in the context of the special conditions, then it didn't work. You should be able to maintain that state of alertness and wakefulness in everyday life.

JM: Well, we should also let our viewers and listeners know that this is a special interest to you because you spent a period of years involved in the *Fourth Way* teachings, particularly the lineage associated with Ouspensky. So you have both a lot of experience, and I suppose it's fair to say a certain attachment to this material.

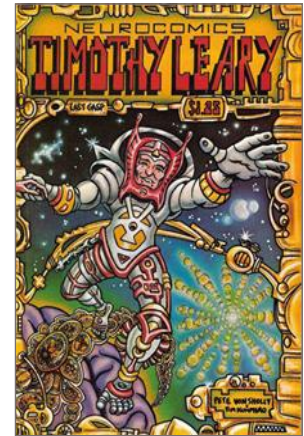
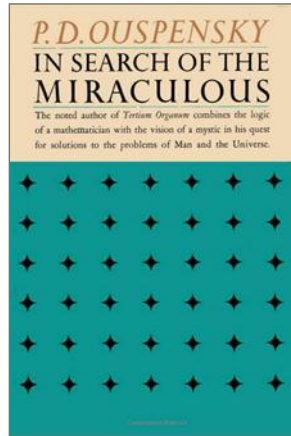
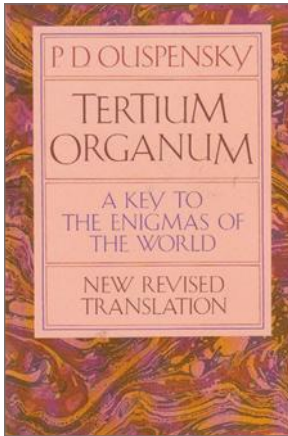
Gary Lachman: Maurice Nicoll: The Psychology of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky's *Fourth Way*

GL: Oh, yes. "I first became interested in Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, and the *Fourth Way* many years ago—longer than I can admit—when I was first reading about these concepts. In the early 1980s, from around 1981 to 1985, I was involved in what was called "The Work," first in New York and then in Los Angeles. This is sort of the homely term for the practical approach. I mean, the *Fourth Way* is somewhat of an esoteric term, but *The Work* refers to the practical aspects, which are physical; it involves actual experiences that you must go through.

It's not just sitting. I don't mean to diminish that, but it isn't just sitting and meditating. You actually go through a whole kind of psychodrama and very rough and tumble, friction inducing circumstances. I did this in New York and in Los Angeles, and I learned a lot from it. But after a time, I just felt that in the end it wasn't for me. I think that mostly says more about me than about it, because I'm a bit more eclectic and interested in many different things. So I tend to synthesize different things.

The people I was involved with were part of the actual *Gurdjieff Foundation*, continuing the lineage that traces back to Gurdjieff himself. He died in 1949. In the early 50s, the Gurdjieff Foundation was established in New York and then in Los Angeles. Jean de Salzmann, who was one of Gurdjieff's closest students, was still alive. She died in 1990. She was the one who was carrying on, sort of the real McCoy, as it were. I was involved in a lot of the hands-on activities. Yes, I certainly got results and all that. But at the time, I just felt I was young and I wanted to do lots of other things. I thought it was better to move on rather than stick with it when I was interested in other things. They understandably want to keep it pure and all that sort of thing. But I still think, the fundamental ideas with





Gurdjieff and Ouspensky is that, Gurdjieff told Ouspensky, "That we're all asleep or we're all machines. We're mechanical. We believe we have free will. We believe we're conscious, but we're not really. But I know a way in which, you know, we can become awake and conscious." Ouspensky had already written this remarkable book of *Tertium Organum*, the third organ of thought, which was a surprise metaphysical bestseller in the early 1920s.

He was well on his way towards exploring these other realms of consciousness. He was a well-known figure in the Theosophical circles in St. Petersburg and Moscow. That's precisely because Gurdjieff sought him out because he needed a good frontman. Just like Madame Blavatsky sought out Colonel Alcott because she was a wild card. She needed a good frontman, just as Gurdjieff did.

Ouspensky was well-known and was brought into the fold. Then when he wound up in London in the early 1920s, he wasn't lecturing about his ideas from his book, *Tertium Organum*. He was lecturing from Gurdjieff. He spent from around 1914 until about 1919. They finally found themselves down in Constantinople. Their

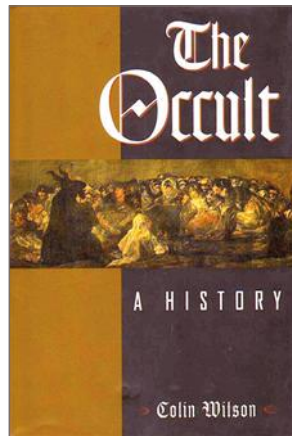
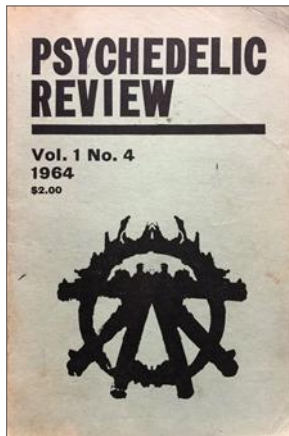
entire time together is an adventure story in itself, as recounted in Ouspensky's book *In Search of the Miraculous*.

The backdrop includes the First World War, the Russian Revolution, the Russian Civil War, and the subsequent collapse of Russia, leading to the Bolsheviks coming to power, while Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, and their followers were funneled across the country into White Russian refugee camps in Constantinople.

JM: My best guess is that maybe half of our audience will know nothing about the *Fourth Way*, will not have heard about Gurdjieff or Ouspensky. A lot of what we're talking about, for example, you mentioned the name Orage in passing; people will have no idea what we're talking about. The other half of the audience may be people such as yourself who have had extensive experience with the *Fourth Way* and are very advanced in their understanding. So we're going to have to try and balance both of those.

But I think it's fair to say the movement grew. It became quite large. I know I was exposed to it in the 1960s in Madison, Wisconsin, of all places. So





Gary Lachman: Maurice Nicoll: The Psychology of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky's Fourth Way

I have to assume that by that time, by the 1960s, there must have been hundreds, if not even thousands, of little outposts of *Fourth Way* teachers?

GL: Oh, yeah. I mean, Ouspensky died in 1947. Gurdjieff died in 1949. But 1949 was the year when *In Search of the Miraculous*, which is Ouspensky's account of the years he spent with Gurdjieff learning the system against the backdrop of a collapsing Russia, was published. Then Gurdjieff's gargantuan jawbreaker of a very eccentric masterpiece *Beelzebub's Tales To His Grandson*, which is one of those what they call a 'doorstopper' here in the UK.

It's this gigantic text in which it's difficult to say things briefly because there's so much history around it. At a certain point, Gurdjieff stopped the institute and he devoted himself to writing. He wrote this book, which, depending on your point of view, can be seen as either an unreadable, crazy work or an esoteric masterpiece, which you have to dig under to get the true meaning of.

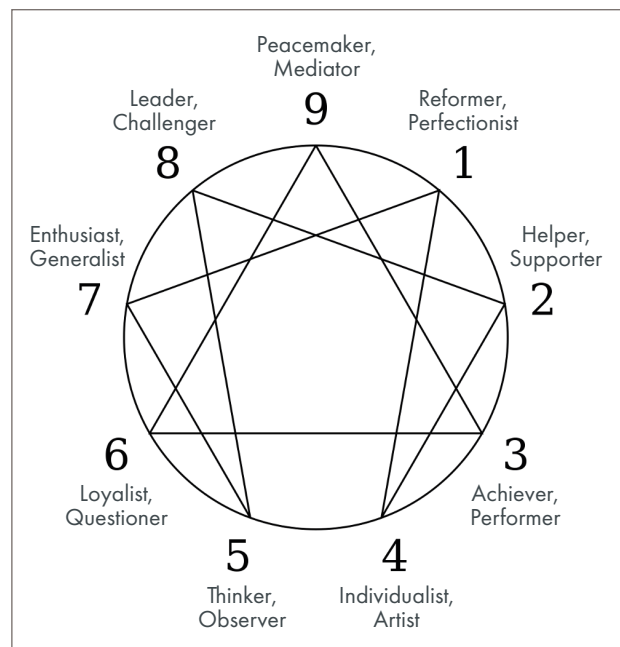
But this was a different direction he went into than what he had taught Ouspensky. Then there's a split between the two. Those are the two main books. They came out around the same time. You have the Gurdjieff Foundation, which starts in the 1950s. They carry on the teaching, but they always kept a low profile. I mean, they never really adver-

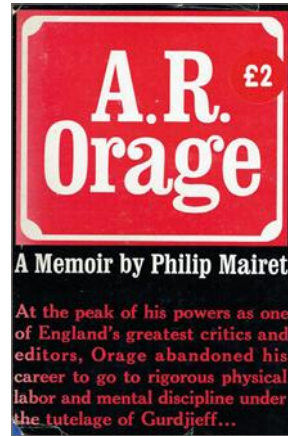
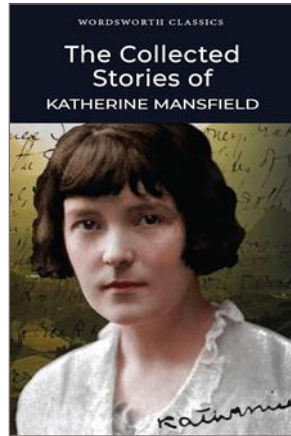
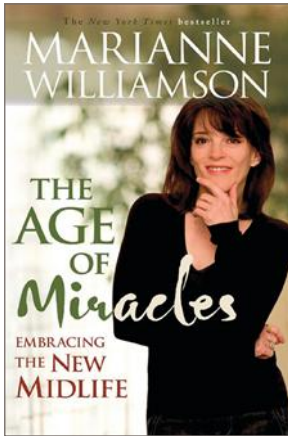
tised this thing. It's one of the things that sets it apart from other esoteric or spiritual groups. They don't go out of the way seeking members. Actually, you have to find your way to them. But then by the 60s, people like Timothy Leary, who he became very interested with the Gurdjieff work, talked about certain ideas that Gurdjieff had in *The Psychedelic Review*, that magazine he put out at the time.

There was a sort of vogue in the 1970s. I first came across him and any mention of this when I read Colin Wilson's book, *The Occult*, in 1975 while I was playing in a punk rock band in New York, of all places.

It wasn't some emissary from an esoteric society that met me. No, no, I just was reading some beat up paperback. But I was like, "Wow, this is fantastic stuff." Yes, my first encounter with it was before I joined the Real Thing. I went to a lecture about it in the Barbizon Hotel in Midtown or the Upper East Side in New York. There were different groups, and there was a period from the late 1970s

Enneagram





to the early 1980s when there was a certain vogue about it.

But later on, people like Marianne Williamson took hold of a symbol called the Enneagram. It's a nine pointed symbol that Gurdjieff introduced to Ouspensky. It's since become kind of common currency in a lot of new age kind of circles. A lot of these ideas have seeped in, and their roots are not necessarily well known. It's never been quite as popular, I would say, as some other like Jung or something like that. It's not as well known as Jung or others.

JM: They did attract a number of famous people. You write about Katherine Mansfield, for example, and you've mentioned Orage, who was a well-known literary figure in England. In fact, as you point out, they sought upper class students in England and in France. It became sort of an elite pre-occupation, I suppose, for people who had the time.

GL: Yeah, sure, or the money. I mean, you know, you had to pay a certain amount to go to the institute in Fontainebleau. The fellow mentioned in the book about Maurice Nicholl was a prestigious Harley Street physician and psychiatrist.

If you live in London, you know what Harley Street means. It's the street where the most prestigious upmarket doctors and psychologists and dentists, whatever, have their establishment. He

had that. And you're right; A. R. Orage was the editor of a journal called *The New Age* before *Our New Age* began.

And Mansfield with H.G. Wells and Bernard Shaw and all these other people at the time, there was this whole melange of different ideas bubbling away just before World War I. Theosophy and Fabian socialism and evolutionism and all this kind of stuff bubbled away in this kind of very optimistic atmosphere. Then World War I happened and that all went out the window. So Orage was publishing all this interesting stuff. He went to Ouspensky's lectures and he was captivated.

Then, Nicholl went to one of them, and he was already Jung's British lieutenant. He was very close to C.G. Jung in the same way that Freud saw Jung as inheriting the throne, inheriting the dynasty of psychoanalysis. Jung saw Maurice Nicholl inheriting at least the British branch of it. What happened is that Nicholl went to one of Ouspensky's lectures and he basically changes allegiance.

After a while, he wrote a 'Dear Carl' letter, essentially saying that he had changed over to Ouspensky. But they were very, very close. I mean, Jung was the godfather of Nicholl's child. Before the breakup, Jung used to come and stay with Nicholl in his home in a very fashionable part of London. There's a famous story of Jung having an encounter with a ghost in a cottage that Nicholl rented outside of London on the coast somewhere. He got it



at a very low price. One of the reasons was that he was told it was haunted. One weekend, I think Jung spent it by himself there or something. Jung was an Anglophile, he loved England. He loved coming to London a lot. He said he woke up in the middle of the night and saw half a woman's face on the pillow next to him. There was all this really nauseating smell and all this horrible stuff. He was so spooked that he went downstairs and he spent the rest of the night in an armchair with the candle lit.

This is the same Jung who had the 12 dead, you know, come to him in Kűsnacht, during the period he was writing *The Red Book*.

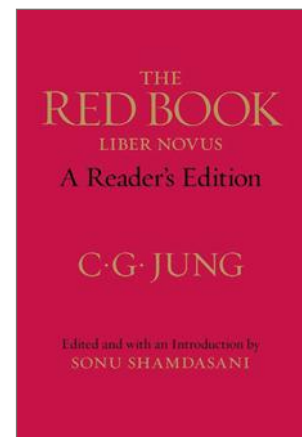
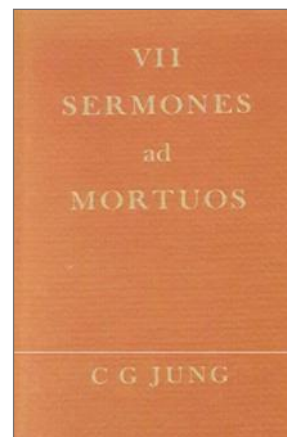
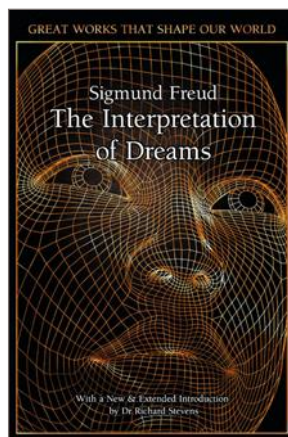
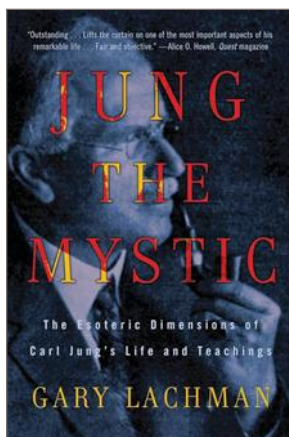
So he had an encounter with the real, I was going to say a real life, British ghost. It really spooked him. Nicholl was very clued in. As we say, he was networking with lots of interesting people. He went to see Ouspensky and he was totally sold. When he heard that Gurdjieff had opened up the institute in France, he sold this prestigious practice that he had on Harley Street and took his young wife, their young child, his sister-in-law and the nanny. They went to this place and they really had no idea what they were heading into.

JM: So you have this esoteric burgeoning. You

have the *Fourth Way* movement. You have Anthroposophy. You have Theosophy. You've written about Aleister Crowley and the Golden Dawn. There's this esoteric burgeoning in Western culture. At the same time, an enormous and culturally powerful movement of depth psychology was emerging. Nicoll is an important person in this history because he, as I see it, fuses these two traditions.

GL: You know, this is true. Well, I mean, what you're saying, this is what I always call this period. The 1920s is the golden age of Western esotericism because everybody, it's like all the good bands are around at the same time playing. Like you said, you have Crowley; Jung is starting out with the Psychology Club in Zurich and he's gone through the whole *Red Book* experience and he's done all that. You've got, as you say, Crowley in Sicily with his Abbey of Thelema. You've got Gurdjieff in Fontainebleau. Ouspensky has his own groups in London and so on. So is this most of what we still today look at as kind of the Western esoteric tradition, at least this modern version comes out of that time.

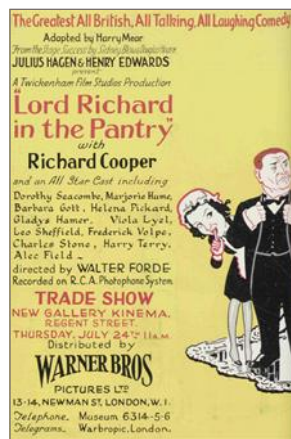
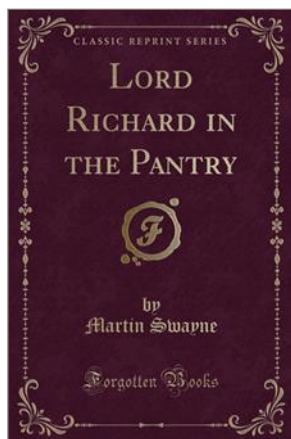
Theosophy was still going strong. Krishnamurti and so on and so on. You said that Nicoll always had a very strong spiritual appetite. He al-



ways had a kind of interest in, what we would call, I guess, sort of mythic religions and things of that sort. He was always interested in the Gnostics. He was interested in the Hermeticists and so on and Meister Eckhart and Western mystics and so on. At the same time that he was studying psychology. I have to say that he himself, along with all the other stuff, was a bestselling author under a pseudonym. He wrote under the pseudonym Martin Swayne and co-authored a book with his sister titled *Lord Richard in the Pantry*, which is sort of like the old 1930s screwball film *My Man Godfrey*, where an aristocrat pretends to be the butler or cook. So that's the kind of irony.

He wrote a story like that. It was a novel, a bestselling novel. It was made into a theatre production and they were earning like thousands of pounds a month from royalties. Then it was made into a film.

The film is considered lost, but it is one of the films that is actually on the British Film Institute's register of lost films. So he was a successful character and his father was a very, very famous political figure. So, yes, Gurdjieff drew, from the cream—the crème de la crème, but he gave all that up to go and spent six months at the Priuré. It's unclear



whether it was exactly six months or a year, or somewhere in between. What he had to do! He was called the Kitchen Boy. What this man said! He had to get up at about five in the morning, light all the fires for the stoves to feed like 60 people. Then later after breakfast, he had to wash all the dishes, but Gurdjieff didn't allow using soap.

It was all these kind of inconveniences. He had to wash all the dishes, but with cold water. And that's so. This is a fellow who, when he was growing up, had a father who was friends with Winston Churchill, Lord Asquith, and other very famous people of the time. He was sitting in on conversations with them. Then, he's here in this mad kind of work camp and his wife is cleaning the toilets and the sister-in-law is doing something else. I mean, the nanny had the best of it. All she had to do was take care of the kid. But everybody else is doing this, all this hard physical labor all the time and eating very little.

Gurdjieff would introduce these very, very, should we say, drastic kind of measures of something called the "Stop Exercise." So whatever you were doing, he would say, "Stop!" You had to stay in exactly that position. There's one story about someone who took a drag from a cigarette and had to hold it in as long as he could until Gurdjieff said. You're holding a hot cup of tea; it's burning your hand... this was all geared to upset our usual mechanical habitual ways.





JM: If I recall correctly, you wrote that the two years that Nicoll spent there at Fontainebleau with Gurdjieff were the best years of his life.

GL: Oh, yeah. I mean, he later became a teacher of this. After he was there, he went back to London and became part of the Gurdjieff and Ouspensky tradition. There was the Gurdjieff strain that split apart, teaching the same ideas, but in very different ways. He became part of that. He was a student of Ouspensky's for about, I don't know, from when he returned to London in 1924 until about 1931. In 1931, Ouspensky said, "Now it's time for you to go and teach the system." He and his wife taught it for the next 20 years. He died in the early 1950s. You talked about earlier this *institute-itis* where the doctrine is, you don't have to go to a monastery to do this work, you can do it in the conditions you find yourself in. Like so many others, they wanted to set up some place where they could create the special conditions and all that, too.

So he was kind of emulating Gurdjieff and wanted to do what Gurdjieff did. Understandably, it must have been an intense time because Gurdjieff was this mad Levantine sort of taskmaster. You don't know whether he's the Devil or God or something like that. He's got the mustache, and it's like, you know, it must have been an incredibly—how do you say it?—transformative time, in whatever way. Some people loved it, some people

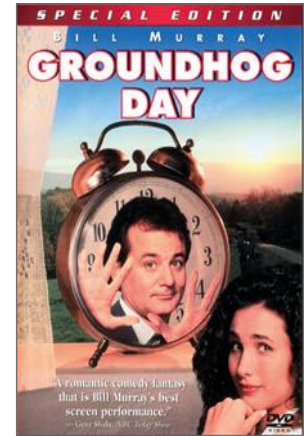
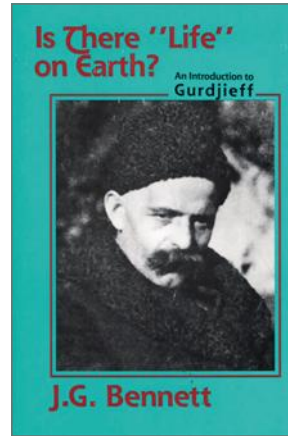
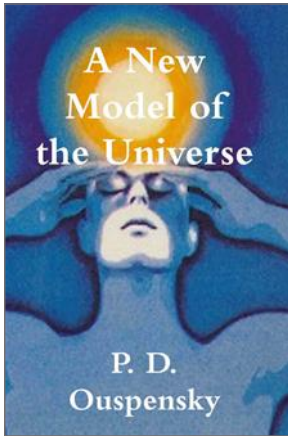
ran away from it. Some people actually physically left. You know, what do you want? To be traumatized by it, and so on and so forth? But for Nicoll, it probably was the most meaningful time in his life. Then he tried to recreate it at different places. One of the things that he did, and actually in a larger context, is that early on he engaged in this kind of off-the-grid lifestyle that people do today. He made these sort of small communities outside of London. He'd get a house, and initially, the first one they had was one that they had to put together. They actually built the house.

He was doing the same sorts of things—quick, quick, quick; hurry, hurry, hurry. He would put it up really quickly, you know, quick and dirty, get it done really fast kind of thing. They did that in different places. I mean, one time when World War II started, some place they had was requisitioned by the army. They had to give it up and all that. So one of the things he did, and this is why I talk about this *institute-itis*, is that he tended to want to set up these kinds of communities and stay within them.

I think there's a religious side to it, too, because he was a very religious character. The aspect of the Gurdjieff system that attracted him was something that Gurdjieff called *Esoteric Christianity*, which was the kind of the secret side of Christianity. I mean, Gurdjieff said a lot of things. Half the time, you don't quite know—was he just saying that for effect? Does he really mean this or not? That kind of thing.

But Nicoll had a deep love of Christianity, but not the Christianity he was brought up in, this Presbyterianism, which was, you know, very dour and dire. All it made him think of was sin. So he was trying to find some kind of church, some kind of congregation he could belong to. I think that's





one of the things he was trying to recreate in these communities.

JM: Well, there's a lot of paradoxes in my mind associated with the *Fourth Way*. For example, as you write, Ouspensky seemed to renounce the whole system at the end of his life. Yet here we are today, some more than 70 years since the death of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky, and the *Fourth Way* teachings seem to be thriving. One gets the impression that something is working.

GL: Well, I mean, they're powerful ideas. I mean, sadly, Ouspensky—we talked about this a while ago because we had a chat about the book.

JM: Yeah, as a matter of fact, let me link to it, Gary.

GL: Yeah, I mean, Ouspensky was a brilliant thinker and writer and actually was a rather gentle poetic soul. Initially, he sort of came to his own in the sort of artistic Bohemian circles in St. Petersburg and Moscow in the early 20th century. He wrote short stories and he wrote poetry. If you know his book, *New Model of the Universe*, which is a fantastic collection of different essays about different esoteric sorts of things. He has these pen portraits of

the Tarot cards and his travels in *In Search of the Miraculous*, including the Sphinx, the Taj Mahal, and places like that. They're very poetic.

But then he went through the Gurdjieffian mill. Gurdjieff was a kind of man, similar to *Zorba the Greek*. If you're familiar with that story, Zorba is portrayed as a man's man. Then, the intellectual meets him. Kazantzakis is intellectual and he's kind of timid and all that. Zorba teaches him how to live and stop living in your head and all that kind of thing. I think there was a similar sort of, alchemy, let's put it, between Gurdjieff and Ouspensky.

I think, in the end, he denied that part of himself later in life—the creative side. He devoted himself completely to teaching the system. Sadly, towards the last days of his life, he left London when the Blitz started. He didn't want to, you know. He already lived through the collapse of Russia. He thought the Nazis were going to win anyway, so he came to the States. Then he sadly sank into reminiscing at night about the old days in Russia and getting through a bottle or two or three, with J.G. Bennett or some of the other students at the time. He more or less kind of sank into a kind of alcoholism.

This was the sort of sad side of it. In the end, he didn't want *In Search of the Miraculous* to be published.



Video interview on *New Thinking Allowed*: P. D. Ouspensky and the Gurdjieff Work with Gary Lachman



Talk about a shock. I mean, the 'shock' is a technical term in the system. This is what Gurdjieff would do, like that "stop" kind of thing. He would create some kind of shock that would take you out of your normal everyday habitual behavior. But Ouspensky out-shocked the master because he came back to London around 1947. He gave a series of lectures, a place called Colet House here over in Baron's Court, where the Study Society, which was a Ouspensky group, still carries on today, where he basically said that it didn't work. He renounced the system. He rejected it. His students didn't know—well, they weren't his students anymore—they didn't know what to make of this. Some people thought, "Oh, this is some fantastic, you know, work, psycho, drama thing. He's not really meaning that, you know, is a test for us," all that kind of thing. Then the other story is that he was driven around all these different places that he knew in London or in England during the time he lived here and would sit for long periods of time just looking at these places that he knew.

The whole idea was that he wanted to fix them in his memory because his *idée fixe*, the idea that more than any other was pure Ouspensky was this notion of what he called the eternal recurrence. If you know the film *Groundhog Day*, it's the same day over and over. Well, eternal recurrence is it's your same life over and over.

You reincarnate into exactly the same life over and over. Nietzsche said this as well, over and over and over again. Ouspensky believed if you woke up, if you got out of your habitual state of consciousness, you'd be able to remember your recurrences and you'd get off the wheel.

What he was doing in his last days, he's being driven to all these places, was having these scenes imprinted on his memory. The next time around he

would remember. There's some suspicion that one of the things he wanted to change was his meeting with Gurdjieff. There's some suspicion that he... that he might have, like maybe next time... maybe we'll do things a bit differently.

JM: One of the fascinating things that you write about is that early on Ouspensky declared that Gurdjieff had gone insane.

GL: Well, I said this is all the psychodrama. There's a couple of things for that. One thing was there's this automobile accident that Gurdjieff has. He was an abominable driver. Everyone was terrified to get in the car with him. But it was a special thing to get in the car with him because if you survived, you did pretty good.

JM: & GL: Hee, hee, hee!

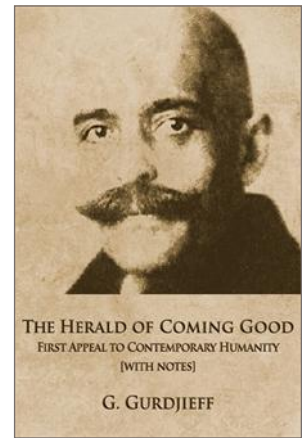
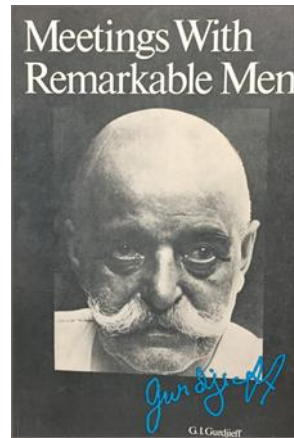
GL: One day, he and his secretary... They usually travel together because Gurdjieff would drive into Paris, Fontainebleau. He was an incredible entrepreneur on the other side of him. He had like restaurants going on and other businesses and things like that. He was an incredible survivor, or incredible kind of street smart. He was able to turn a dollar, like all the time in amazing sorts of ways. Then this one day before he was going into Paris, he made special attention, that the car, everything in the car would be checked. The brakes, everything, the steering, everything would be checked. Then he told the secretary, "No, you... when we return from Paris, you take the train. I want to drive alone," which was strange.

Then what happens is, he's driving a Citroën and on the road between Paris and Fontainebleau goes off the road and it crashes into a tree.



When he's found he's lying out on the road with a cushion from the car under his head. Like someone had put him there, or somehow he had. But he's completely... his hands are lacerated. He's very, very... horrible wounds and he's really hurt very badly. He was unconscious for several days after that and all that. The idea is that he somehow arranged the accident on purpose. He somehow made it happen on purpose because he sort of wanted to get rid of everybody around him. He got what he could from all the people around him. He always said, "I need rats for my experiments." He would collect lots of people around him and then maybe whatever, learn from his interaction with them what he wanted to learn. Then he didn't want them anymore. So he had the accident and he closed down the Prieuré. It was after this that he started to write. Somehow Ouspensky, when he heard about the accident, said, "No, something's not right here. Something happened." He wondered if Gurdjieff had somehow gone on the left hand path or, you know, he claimed to have been.

His system came from what he called the Sarmoung Brotherhood, which was sort of like the Mahatmas for Madame Blavatsky in Tibet. This was a secret monastery that he encountered as a younger man in his travels in Central Asia. His system came from that. Then it was sort of like, "Oh, it's his system now." It's not theirs. Kind of like... he had gone rogue or something like that. Ouspensky was much more tactful. He was not the wild kind of wild card that Gurdjieff was. He was fairly bourgeois, even though he was an artist and all that. Gurdjieff was always acting all the time. He never knew, is this for real? Are you pulling my leg? That was the whole idea. "Teacher, is this a lesson?" "Well I don't know, is it? You tell me." Ouspensky was more a scientist.

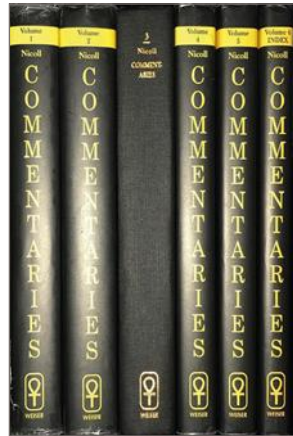
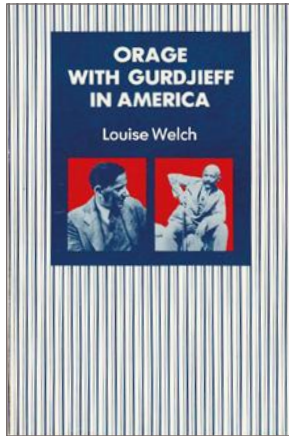


"Now you do these exercises, you do this, you get those results." So any case, he sort of thinks Gurdjieff went off the deep end. Then Gurdjieff later on produced this very strange work called *Herald of Coming Good*, which is the only one of his writings published at the time. I think it's still available. Weiser published it years ago. But it was... it had a faint sense of madness around it. It was just completely outrageous. Again, you don't know: Is this for real? Is he pulling your leg?

But he was making all these preposterous claims and having centers around the world and developing all this remarkable technology. And nothing's going on whatsoever. Ouspensky got one look at this and he said, "Oh my, Gurdjieff's gone off the rails, or something like that." But you never know, you never know. So that was one of the things. There was a split there. At that point, basically, Ouspensky says, "Work with me, but you can't have anything to do with Gurdjieff."

Gurdjieff, by that time, was involved in many activities. He was in the States for several years with A.O. Orage, went to America to hit the drum, tub thumping for the Gurdjieff system in New York and in different places. Basically drumming up as much money possibly as he could for him.

This is one of the things in the end that drove Orage away from Gurdjieff is his incessant demands for money and also the fact that Gurdjieff didn't like the woman that he married.



Gary Lachman: Maurice Nicoll: The Psychology of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky's Fourth Way

JM: Well, all of this raises the question as to whether or not the *Fourth Way* was actually a system or whether Gurdjieff was just experimenting the whole time.

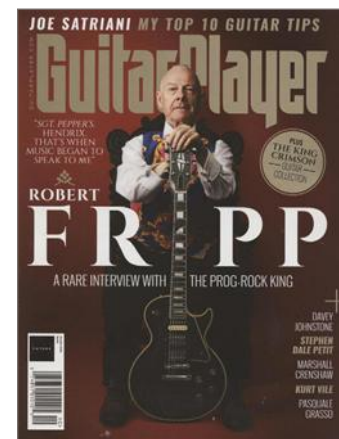
GL: Well, this is the question. What is the genuine, *Fourth Way*? Nicoll, in this fantastic monumental collection of what he calls the *Psychological Commentaries on the Teachings of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky*, it's like a five, six volume set—he said in that and in his own diaries and writings, his task is to hand on the teaching in the way that it was given to him without changing it in any way. You know, it has to be. That's the teaching that Gurdjieff gave to Ouspensky. That's in the book *In Search of the Miraculous*. Then Gurdjieff later on, "Oh, no, I don't use those terms anymore. Self-remembering? What's that? I don't know. I have a whole other stuff and this is the stuff that came out of *Beelzebub's Tales*." It's a whole other kind of thing.

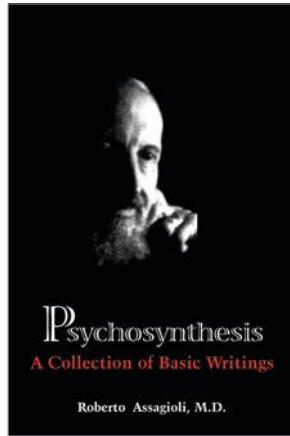
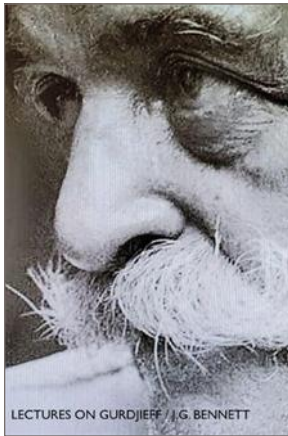
So someone who stayed in the Ouspensky line, when they're both alive, and they bumped into a Gurdjieffian, the Gurdjieffian would say, "Oh, you're still doing all that stuff? Well, this is the new thing," and all that. But then Ouspensky said, "Well, no, this is what Gurdjieff told me he'd learned from the Sarmoung Brotherhood. So which is which? Is that the teaching?" And so it was all... and again, the impression I get, especially from the ac-

counts from people at the Prieuré, at the institute, mainly at Fontainebleau, was, that everybody was on their toes constantly. Nobody knew exactly what was going on. Gurdjieff never said the same thing twice, many times. Madame Blavatsky was like that as well. So is that the teaching itself to keep you constantly sort of on your toes?

It's a story I tell in there about the institute when again, it was apparently, the hygiene wasn't, top of the list. It's like the kitchen was full of flies and all this kind of thing. J.G. Bennett, who himself wrote many books about about the Work and was an important thinker in his own right, started Sherborne Institute here in London. Robert Fripp, the guitarist from King Crimson, was one of the famous people who went to school there and all that. His partner, companion, Mrs. Beaumont, came to the Prieuré to visit. She got one look at the kitchen, she got some fly paper and put it up. Suddenly the flies were gone. The others were saying, "Oh, no, no, we weren't supposed to do that. We had to deal with negative emotions." Then Gurdjieff came in and said, "Oh, what a brilliant idea, the fly paper." Then so... it's like fly paper or no fly paper? You know, what is this?

The other thing was like, was there really an institute? In an exchange between Gurdjieff and Nicoll, Gurdjieff is telling him all of this is only temporary. "We don't build for posterity. This will be different. Everyone will be someplace else soon, so it's all temporary." But at





the same time, around the same time, he talks to J.G. Bennett and he tells him about his plans for building an observatory up in a certain point. He's developed a way to make the planets look bigger through a certain special telescope. Again, all these other grandiose kinds of things. So was there really an institute? Was there no institute? Don't ask me. I don't know.

Even Nicoll tells the story. Someone is there saying to him, "Please, can you just tell me what's going on here, what we're doing?" He said, "Well, why are you asking me? I haven't the slightest idea. I don't know myself." So in some way, it's kind of like a live in, live Zen, koan, to be in that place. It's just up to you to decide what you do. Some people said, "Okay, I figured this out. This isn't for me."

This fellow named James Young, who was one of the many people that were involved in the psychoanalysis early years, as you mentioned, in London. There was what they call the psychosynthesis group that was the psychoanalysis. Well, you take the psyche apart. Well, it's psychosynthesis. Let's put it back together. So let's see if we can do a Humpty Dumpty on this. But he was there for a while. He was a student of Jung's. Then after a while, he just said, "No, I've just had it." He went back and Jung wrote him a letter congratulating him on his escape. One of the things I was writing this book, I said, "God, what would I give to have seen Jung and Gurdjieff in the same room together

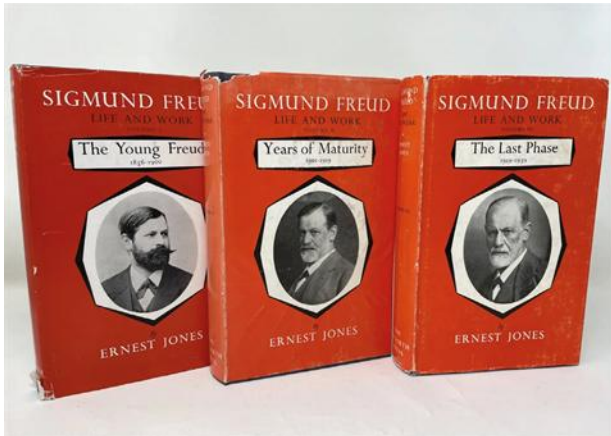
and see like what would happen?" Because in many ways, they're very similar. They're both large, larger than life characters. They both were good cooks. They both like physical hard work. I mean, Jung famously built that tower and did the stone chiseling and all that sort of thing. So I just... I always wondered what would have happened had they met?

JM: Well, back to Maurice Nicoll. You point out that one of his unique qualities is that he personally interacted with Gurdjieff, Ouspensky and Jung.

GL: Yeah, yeah. You don't get too many people who had all three of them as teachers. But, yeah, after he finished school at Cambridge and his first, what he was going to first do, is be what they call a GP here, a general practitioner, just a doctor. Then he heard about this new science, psychoanalysis and all that. He became fascinated with that.

He basically asked his father, who was, fairly well off, "Can I go and study with Dr. Jung in Zurich?" So he goes and he doesn't meet Freud, but he certainly meets Jung. He actually encounters Jung during the time when Jung is going through the breakup with Freud. He encounters Jung during the time when Jung is producing all this wild stuff that we know is *The Red Book* and going through his own psychotic breakdowns and having visions and waking dreams and all this sort of stuff. All of this is in these diaries that Nicoll kept around that time. Later on, he stops the diaries when he starts going to the Prieuré. But from the mid-1910s until then, he kept a diary of his dreams, interpretations of those dreams, and his encounters with Jung, as well as later experiences with Ouspensky and others. But from, I don't know, mid-19 teens up until, then he's keeping this diary and his dreams, interpretations of dreams, his encounters with Jung





and then later on his encounters with Ouspensky and all that.

That's fascinating, too, because these people are turning up in his dreams. He's got Ouspensky and Jung and all these other people in his dreams and him trying to understand that these, according to Jung, are projections of his own personality. "So who's the Ouspensky in me? Who's the Jung in me?" And all that. So it's a remarkable kind of thing. You mentioned, like the early years of psychoanalysis, Ernest Jones, who's Freud's bulldog and writes the first big official biography.

He's in there, too. He's kind of the shadow figure, because what Jones wants to do—he's Freudian, through and through—he wants to get rid of all the Jungians. He wants to cut the Jungian rump off the psychoanalytic society. Nicoll was one of these people that he wants to get rid of. So it's all this, again... this kind of drama going on back there. But it was an incredible rich time when all these different ideas were blending and flowing over each other, and before they all crystallized into different things.

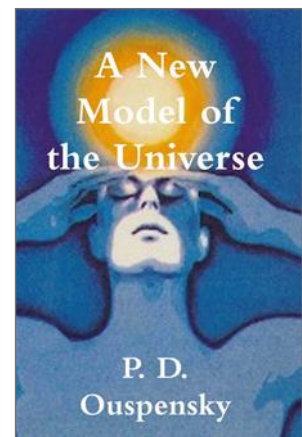
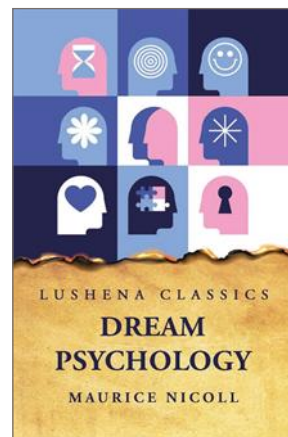
JM: If I understand correctly from your book, Gary, whereas the Jungians and the Freudians are deeply into dream analysis, and Nicoll was following that pursuit, the *Fourth Way* teachers were saying, "Dreams are meaningless, don't pay any attention to them at all."

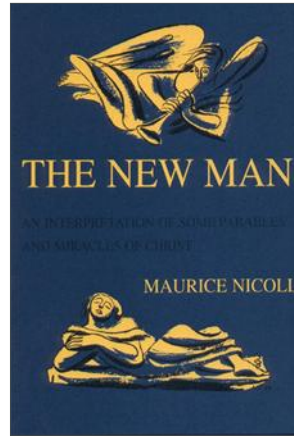
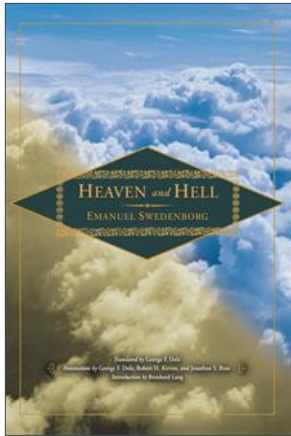
Gary Lachman: Maurice Nicoll: The Psychology of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky's Fourth Way

GL: Yeah, this is interesting. I mean, the first book Nicoll wrote under his own name is called *Dream Psychology*. It's the first book in English, if I'm correct, about Jung's psychology of dreams. It's still a very important read.

Ouspensky wrote a lot about dreams. He wrote a lot about hypnagogia, the in-between state between sleeping and waking. There's a long chapter on those in his book, *New Model of the Universe*. But according to Gurdjieff, no. This is just the waste of time to write your dreams down because you want to wake up. You don't want to deal with all the stuff that comes up when you're sleeping and all this kind of thing. I mean, Gurdjieff said a lot of things. There's lots of stuff like, breathing exercises weren't good for you. He called Kundalini, *Kundabuffer*. You half wonder, "Okay, is this a deep esoteric insight?" or is he just basically, "Oh, no, those guys don't know what we're doing." You know what I mean? Like talking down the competition.

I mean, it sounds crude, but you think, it's just wonder. But Nicoll continued to write, although he eventually stopped the journals. He likely kept them going for a time. But the only ones we have are these from these different times. But yeah, why exactly Gurdjieff says dreams? I don't know.





Ouspensky didn't have anything good to say about Freud or Jung or any of that sort of thing. One of the other things you discover, you read these people, none of them have anything good to say about each other. Jung had a client who was very much into Anthroposophy and Rudolf Steiner. She brought him some of Steiner's books to read. She asked him, "What did you think?" He said, "That man should be in an asylum." You know, so, did he really mean that? Was tongue in cheek? You know, Swiss kind of humor? But it's true. Nicoll wrote a very interesting book about dreams from a Jungian point of view, which primarily discusses the differences between Freud's and Jung's perspectives. The simplest way is, Freud is saying where dreams coming from and Jung saying where the dreams are going to.

So what's the cause of the dream? Freud is, "What's the cause of the dream?" Jung, "What does the dream want?" So for Freud, there's, "Oh, you want to sleep with your mother, or kill your father? That's why you had this kind of dream." Or for Jung, it might be, "Oh, you really want to be a poet or you really want to do something else. That's why you have this dream." So the unconscious wants to become conscious. Again, that's the other difference, too. For Freud, this on itself should prove Freudian notions about dreams incorrect. Freud said we have the dream so that we're not woken up at night, that the dream camouflages our real desires.

That's why you need to go to the psychoanalysis to tell you what the dream means. So you're unconscious is not letting you know what you really want. It covers it up with this camouflage, so you have a good night's sleep. Right?

But most of us don't always have a good night's sleep for that reason, so it's a different kind of thing. Whereas Jung said, "No, it's not camouflage, the dream is what it is. The dream is a natural product of the psyche. It's not trying to pull a fast one on you, but it just it speaks in the symbolic language." That's what Nicoll's book *Dream Psychology* is about. And again, this is pre *anima* and pre *shadow* Jung. This is before he starts using those sorts of terms. But it's what he calls the prospective tendencies of the unconscious. If you familiar with Jung's work, even that early on, you can see this is what the way to become like synchronicity or something like that. You know, the psyche's tendency to project itself out into the world, it's goal oriented in a certain way, it's purposive, it's projecting out. It's the perspective tendencies, whereas for Freud, it's like, "No, it's all the stuff back here that's making you," or even worse than Freud, just a purely materialistic one.

So you had, you know, you had onions in your salad. You know what I mean?

JM: & GL: Heh, heh, heh.





GL: So that's the purely materialistic one.

JM: I'm under the impression, Gary, from your book that the reason why Nicoll's work is important is... well, I'd say two things. One, he very clearly lays out in a logical fashion the *Fourth Way* teachings. And two, he integrates them in a larger worldview that includes depth psychology. It also includes the mystical teachings of people like Swedenborg and perhaps others in the Western esoteric tradition.

GL: Yeah, that's one of the things I discovered some years ago before, you know, even thought about doing this book was I was reading Nicoll's psychological commentaries. I've written a book about Jung. I've written a book about Swedenborg. I think, "Oh, God, that sounds like Jung. This sounds like *the shadow*, this sounds like *synchronicity*." Or something like that.

Oh, love and wisdom? Well, those are real, key Swedenborgian terms. I discovered that actually, I knew that he had been a follower of Jung. I later learned that in his last years, he became very, very interested in the work of Swedenborg. One of the interests, again, is that Swedenborg himself developed a kind of esoteric Christianity. Swedenborg devoted this huge text, *Arcana Coelestia* (Heavenly Secrets) to his esoteric interpretation of the Book of Genesis. He was going to do the entire Bible. But I think we should be thankful he stopped where

he did, because he would have had a book about 20 times as big as the Bible.

But Nicoll was doing the same sort of thing. One of the things I say is like in his book, *The New Man*, which is rather thin, but very, very important and dense work about his esoteric interpretations of the Gospels.

There was another unfinished work called *Mark*. It's the same sort of thing. They all revolve around this notion of *metanoia*, which is the Greek term. We say change of mind, but it's a much more powerful kind of experience than that. It's a complete transformation of your inner world. In some ways, I think Nicoll's ideas of how to interpret dreams or how to read dreams fed into how he reads the parables. So parables, in a certain way, are similar to dreams because they communicate in a symbolic kind of language. Symbolic language means more than it says. A regular language means what it says. And I say what I mean and I mean what I say.

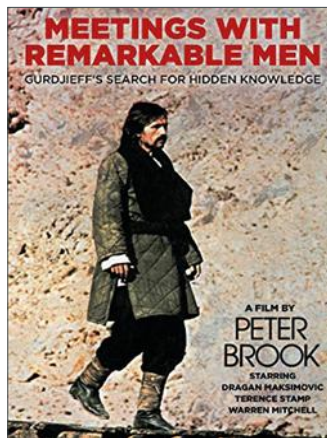
It was like symbolic language. You can say something, but then what it means is something larger than just the literal meaning of the words. This was the contrast, let's say, between the Presbyterianism that Nicoll grew up in—whereas the literal interpretation, like fundamentalist Christians today, is, the Bible is the word of God. It's the literal interpretation of it. Whereas, no... that's what we would call the Petrine Church, the church that came out of Peter. During an earlier time, there were many developments before the Petrine Church became dominant. You had the Gnostics, the Gnostic Church, who were Christians at the time. They had a more symbolic, esoteric interpretation of Christ's teachings and his acts and all that. They were interested in what they called *Gnosis*, which is a way of knowing something, a kind of



immediate, intuitive way of knowing. That's the kind of knowing that comes in dreams when you say, "Ah, now I see what that means." It isn't, "Oh yes. I put that together and put that together." It isn't logical sequences. Suddenly it hits you.

This was the effect that Nicoll said the parables had, if you read them in this esoteric way. You're not convinced by an argument, but you're lifted up into this more subtle and more penetrating way of seeing things. This is something that Swedenborg did as well. So, yes, he had this kind of melange. I said earlier, in most of the traditions of the *Fourth Way* that carry on from Gurdjieff, it's a purist thing. You stick to it, not necessarily in a dry, fundamentalist way, but it's a sort of sense where... if you want to learn French, you don't start thinking in German, right? It's sort of similar to that. But I think, Nicoll was able to bring these elements together, and personally, he was a much more congenial, friendly, and almost jovial proponent of a system that is often very austere and demanding.

Ouspensky became this kind of Iron Man logician, a taskmaster character. Gurdjieff, you never knew what was going to happen around him, [if] he would explode or whatever. But Nicoll was kind of... you could sit at the pub with him and have a pint, as they say here. It's kind of a Chestertonian character, like the local vicar, like Father Brown or someone. You could just sit with him and talk. He would communicate in a humorous way, which doesn't necessarily come across in the writings, but the people who knew him, around him, say, he was able to communicate deep, profound ideas in a humorous way and leave it to you to get it. The same way, whether you get the joke or not, there's



certain jokes you have to be a bit intelligent to be able to see. "Oh, yeah, I get it!" So that would be the same kind of thing. Again, likewise with interpreting the dreams or interpreting the parables. It's a certain way of being able to see things that's a little bit above the everyday

and the literal.

JM: I'd like to go back to a topic we haven't really covered, which is *the Movements*. I'm under the impression that if Gurdjieff did in fact learn anything at the Sarmoung monastery, it might very well have been those *Movements* that he taught.

GL: Well, he says in *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, which was, well, [he was writing] *Beelzebub's Tales*, was writing *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, and then there's a later book called *Life is Real Only Then, When I Am*, which he left unfinished. But *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, it's about his early years in his travels with a group of others called the "Seekers of Truth". Again, it's full of metaphor and symbolism. How much do you take literally? How much should be interpreted in terms of a metaphor for something?

JM: It was made into a wonderful movie by Peter Brook, as I recall.

GL: Yes, exactly. When I was in *the work*, ages ago, one of the people who was the group leader was one of the principal dancers of the *Movements* in that film. He passed away some years ago, and if you know that scene in the film where they're doing the *Movements*, suddenly it's like electric, and also when Terence Stamp comes on. But he



says there was this strange figure, this statue that had moving arms. It was something that, I forget the term he uses, but it was able to communicate, the solar system or things of that sort. It would communicate astronomical kind of lore, but other things as well in the different movements and positions. It was from that, the sort of different movements that he taught later on. Again, this was a later thing. It wasn't the time with Ouspensky. He didn't have that with Ouspensky. So you wonder, "Okay, if you always had this, if you learned this in the Sarmoung, why didn't you bring it up then?"

So, did he learn it? Did he? That *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, the book, didn't come out until the early 1960s. It was published, I think, 1961 or 1962. It was a later addition to the work of literature.

I practiced them a bit myself, ages ago when I was in Los Angeles. I have to say, they're very, very difficult. One of the things I say in the book is, I think they're a way to purposely induce second wind. I'm not saying that's all they are, but I think physiologically we can understand it in that way. Second wind is, when you're an athlete, you're running the marathon, whatever it is, and you just don't have any more [energy]. "I can't do it. I cannot. I can't move another step." Then you push yourself. Then, suddenly, you got a full tank of gas, and you're going 90 miles an hour and you just feel, "Oh, man, I could do this all night."

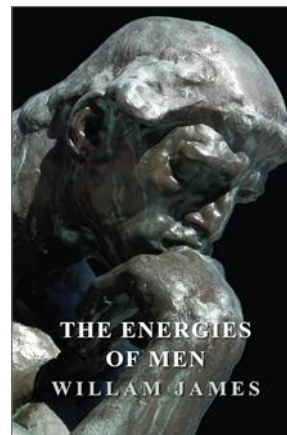
So this is one of the things Nicoll says in his diaries, that Gurdjieff's method is to induce frustration. You're pushed beyond your limits. He had this idea of "super efforts," like, if you walked 10 miles, walk another two before you rest. You always do more than you have to. You purposely push yourself on. I say this because this is what happened to me when I was trying to learn these

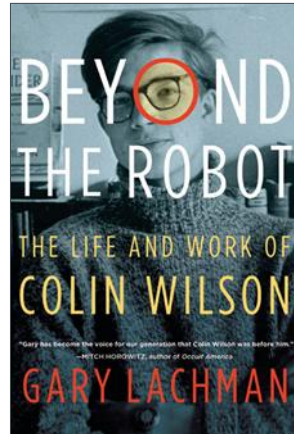
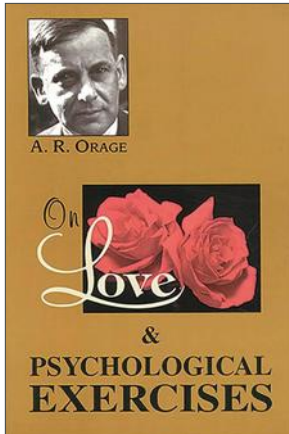
movements. Again, this is ages ago. This would have been about 1983 or something like that, and in Los Angeles. I learned some. But there's a very difficult set of them, and I just couldn't get it. I was just, "I can't do this." I was just about to drop out. I tried one more time—and suddenly everything was where it should be. I felt like, "Man!" I just felt so full of energy. I wanted to get my car and drive to San Francisco, just for the fun of it.

The reason I say about the second wind is the psychologist William James, who's a bit earlier. He met Freud. He was a bit earlier than Freud. He met Jung as well, but a bit earlier than them. He wrote about this. He wrote a very important essay called *The Energies of Men*. He talks about how we limit ourselves to degrees of fatigue that we've only come by habit to obey. If we're put into some kind of crisis situation where we're forced to do something, we suddenly discover we have all this energy. Or, he would talk about the neurasthenic patients. Patients who simply [say], "Ah no, I can't get out of bed. No, I can't do anything. I have no energy whatsoever." He would apply what he called the bullying treatment, which I don't think you can get by today. But the bully would force them to get out of bed, make an effort. Then suddenly it's child's play, and

they want to go, run the marathon or whatever it is like that.

So Gurdjieff, I believe—I'm not saying he didn't learn from wherever he learned—but I think, the psychological, the physiological explanation for the mechanisms of it is that he pushed people





beyond the limits that they had sort of voluntarily accepted. “This is it. Is all I can do.”—“No, you have much more.”

I mentioned Orage, the story of Orage where he came. Here's a guy who held his own with H.G. Wells and Bernard Shaw and other people at the time. He was a very well known, very famous, prestigious editor in London. He's at the Prieuré. He's given a shovel and he's told to dig. He [Gurdjieff] says, “Dig until I come back and tell you not to dig.” Then they fill up the hole. “Dig it again and fill it up again.” He was doing this. He's back breaking. He's even saying how he would cry himself to sleep at night, thinking, “What the hell have I done? What the hell have I put myself into here?” Then the next day he goes and he digs and suddenly he's enjoying the digging and he's doing it. He's like digging more than he digs and he just doesn't want to stop digging.

You know, a couple of years ago, I started painting my flat and I so enjoy doing it. I put myself into it. I wanted to go paint my neighbor's flat. I went to knock on their door and say, “Do you need any touch up or anything?” This is something Colin Wilson who I've written about, he has this notion of the robot. But it's just a simple thing. If you put more into some everyday activity, some habitual activity than you're used to, putting into more than it actually needs, you can actually find yourself enjoying doing it.

JM: Well, it seems as if that idea of the second wind is also a good argument for why we need coaches, teachers and gurus. Why? It's better not to try to do it all on your own.

GL: Well, yeah, unless you're a self-motivator, then yeah, I guess the idea is to get you going. I mean, Nicoll was someone who he admitted that when he wrote this letter to Jung, saying, “You know, I've come across this other teaching, and I think I can get more out of it than what I'm getting from your work, important as it is.”

He admitted that Jung left too much up to him. It was like, “Here's the materials that you can work with, but you have to do it yourself.” Nicoll himself just admitted he needed someone to force him. Throughout his diaries, he laments his laziness and at times and things like that. So there's a kind of inertia, inner resistance. We all have it. We're all faced with that, that he talks about. But he says to Jung, “One of the things I need [is] somebody to sort of force me,” and that's exactly what he got.

I guess the other side of that is, at a certain point, the whole idea is for you to get on your own two feet. At what point do you decide, “No Sensei, I'm going to go off and on my own now.” Do you ever? I guess one of the questions is, do you ever graduate from the Gurdjieff school or the Gurdjieff work? Do you ever graduate and go, “Okay, I've learned what I can.” I mean, after Ouspensky





died in 1947, a lot of his students wound up going to Gurdjieff, and he was in Paris at that time.

But Nicoll didn't go. He was one of the few people who didn't go and see Gurdjieff after Ouspensky's death. He basically said, "Well, I learned what I could from him." Any true believer at the time would say, "No, you can always learn something more." But he didn't go. I think that's another reason why he's been sidelined, in the Gurdjieff world tradition. He's there, but he's not one of the main figures who gets mentioned, when you talk about the ones who are carrying on *The Work*.

JM: The subtitle of your book is *The Forgotten Teacher of the Fourth Way*. I gather you're arguing that it would be better if he wasn't so forgotten.

GL: No one else that I know of had Jung, Ouspensky and Gurdjieff, all as his teachers, knew them personally, had personal encounters with them and all that... and then was able to blend all these things together later with the helpings of Swedenborg.

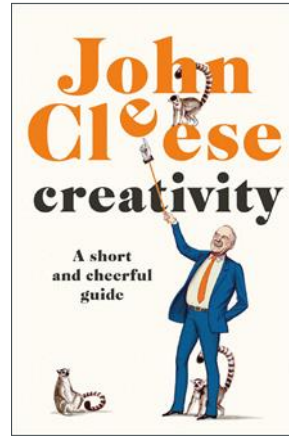
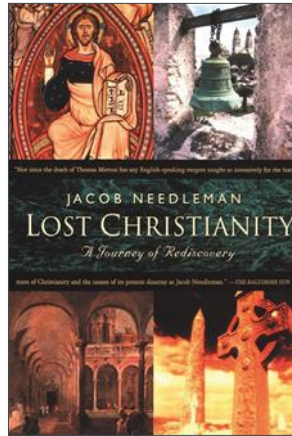
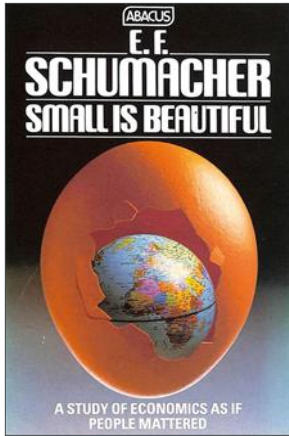
Plus other things, too. If you're reading the diaries and then also reading his own writings, he's reading books about Zen; he's reading books about Indian philosophy, Buddhism and all that. Along with Swedenborg, he became very interested in Meister Eckhart. It's a different kind of... it isn't the kind of strenuous path that the Gurdjieff

work is, striving all the time, working against your mechanicalness. This is more of a kind of letting go. I guess, "Let go and let God," is kind of the catchphrase of it. But it's a different sort of thing. He even says that in his diaries. He says, "Well, this isn't the same sort of path. But then I feel more attuned, attuned toward this." I think it's the Christian sort of thing. I mean, he grew up in Presbyterianism, its very dour, depressing kind of faith. But he always had a great love of Jesus and a great love of God. He basically wanted to find some kind of congregation that he felt he could belong to. He didn't feel he belonged to the congregation that he was growing up in. Early on, that meant, "There must be something wrong with *me*." Later on, he figured, "No, there's something wrong with *it*." So I think that's the other thing, too, is that the kind of, be perfect as your Father was perfect. There's that side of Jesus that doesn't get as much press as, you know, "Come to me all the weary." You know, blatant and all that kind of thing. So it's more of giving over. Giving over your burden, to a greater power. Again, you have to recognize that he was ill in his last years, too. Physically, he was feeling not as strong as he had been when he was doing all the more strenuous kind of work.

JM: He died of cancer, as I recall.

GL: Yes. He somehow knew in advance. Quite a few years in advance, that he had this intuition that his last years were coming. This is one of the things that led to making sure that the commentaries were published before he died and also making sure that they said the short book, *The New Man*, was published. I mentioned this kind of laziness and inertia with Nicoll. This is one of the things, he found it difficult to finish writing, which is just one





of the paradoxes. I felt like, “We did all this other stuff.” But then he wrote this sort of bestselling books. He also earlier was a contributor to the magazine *The Strand*, which was a famous magazine in London, the Sherlock Holmes stories, all that kind of thing. So he was well known at a certain point, and he could meet a deadline, but then somehow later on, it became very, very difficult for him to actually sit down and write and finish the thing. He was always kind of starting and stopping. Then there's a lot of self-incrimination in the diaries about that. He would go and do something else. He'd like to do hands-on stuff. He was very [much] like Gurdjieff. He was very mechanical, he was very good at DIY and stuff like that. So I think he preferred doing that to the actual writing. But once he intuited that his days were numbered, as it were, he labored to get finished what he could to pass on to his legacy.

He's got some interesting readers. E.F. Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful: A Study of Economics As If People Mattered*. He was one of his readers. Jacob Needleman, the American philosopher, who also was involved in the Gurdjieff work and was also interested in traditionalism. John Cleese, you know, the Monty Python comedian—he said in a couple of interviews that the *Psychological Commentary* is one of his favorite books. He said more than once that Nicoll was one of the most important thinkers of spiritual ideas that he's ever come across.

So, he's had some interesting readers over the years.

JM: I gather that at the time of his death, he had many students, hundreds of students,

and was greatly beloved by them. But at the same time, you hint that some of the early psychological problems that he may have developed, conflicts with his parents, for example, the repression of his upbringing in the Christian church, these are things that he may never have resolved in spite of all of his other attainments.

GL: He's not alone, we all carry 'the eggshells of our birth', as Hermann Hesse says in the beginning of one of his books. But no, he died in 1953, and he had about 800 students that would come out to one of the places he had outside of London. And everyone who met him said he was one of the most remarkable people they've ever met, and he was unlike anyone else. He must have had a kind of immediate presence. You would think he was a doctor, so he must have had a good bedside manner. He was a psychologist. He knew how to be empathetic with people and all that.

The diary itself is a thousand plus page monster. It's all fragmentary. He writes in code and is trying to relate his dreams, interpret them, and discuss their meanings at the same time. It takes a lot of work to get some idea of what he's talking about. There's a lot about sex. I mean, it doesn't come through in his work and in the writings. But he himself says that in many ways, he had an obsession with sex. He pursued a kind of eroto-mystical, kind of almost Tantric practice that I think a



few times. Going by what he recorded in the diary, it sounds like he did reach some sort of illuminated states in them, some sort of altered states of consciousness. But yes, as you say, [there] was this conflict later on in his life. He felt really bad about leaving Jung and he wrote Jung a letter, apologizing for this. Jung always had a difficult time with relationships with men. He had much better relationships with women than he had with men. I think he always felt a little awkward when anyone was trying expressing love or anything like that.

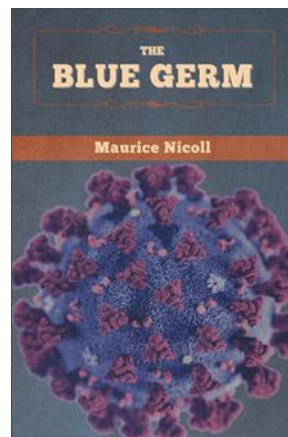
Also, Nicoll felt that he had somehow slandered Ouspensky in some way. So, it was a lot of self-recrimination, a lot of, as you say, feeling bad, simply about himself, at different times. If you know his background,... his father, William Robertson Nicoll, is not known today, but at the time, he was a very important political and religious writer. He's one of these alpha males. That was just everything around him, his cigarettes all the time. He's got secretaries all the time around him. He's living not far from where I live, in London, Hampstead, really nice part of town, up in the hills and green and leafy and all that. He doesn't have much time for little Maurice, who's essentially... he had a sort of scientific kind of mechanical bent. His father

wasn't interested in that at all. There's a feeling like he always had the shadow of a very dominating famous father around him.

He wrote under a pseudonym, the fiction he wrote. He wrote a fantastic science fiction novel called *The Blue Germ*. No one knows about it. When I was writing the book, it was like during the height of COVID. I thought someone should found this book and put it out because it's a germ that rather than make you sick, it kills all the other germs. So it's a germ that kills all the other germs and it grants you immortality. It's the theme of like, well, what do we do with the immortality? It's different expressions of: this person does that, that person does this,... But it it's well written. You know, an enterprising publisher might do well putting it out. So, that was written under this pseudonym. He kind of had this alter ego where he was living out this larger life. But as himself in a certain way, he always got the feeling he's not cringing. There's always a sense of this big father over him. He stuttered, he had this bad stutter. Through sessions with Jung, Jung cured him of the stutter. The stutter was rooted in this sense of somehow intimidation with his father.

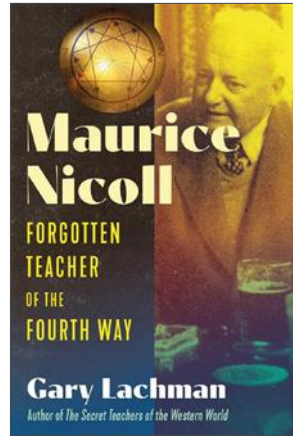
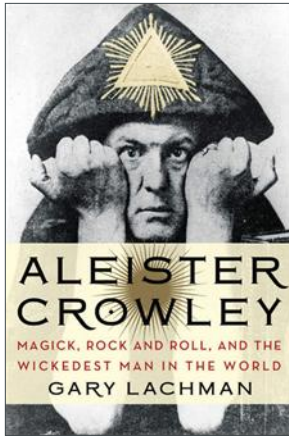
Each man carries the vestiges of his birth;
the slime and eggshells of his primeval past
with him to the end of his days. Some never
become human, remaining frog, lizard, ant.
Some are human above the waist, fish below.

— Hermann Hesse —



JM: Gary, we could go on and on. There's a great deal. I have to highly recommend your book to our audience. I know one of your reviewers said it's your best book ever. I know you've written many, many books at this point. I do have to say, I think your skill as





a historian and as a writer just keeps getting better with each book.

Anyone who has any curiosity about the early 20th century, about the birth of depth psychology, and certainly about the *Fourth Way*, would want to read this book very much. I highly recommend it. So once again, Gary, thank you for being with me.

GL: Oh, it's absolutely a pleasure, Jeffrey. Thank you very much.

JM: And for those of you watching or listening, thank you for being with us, because you are the reason that we are here.

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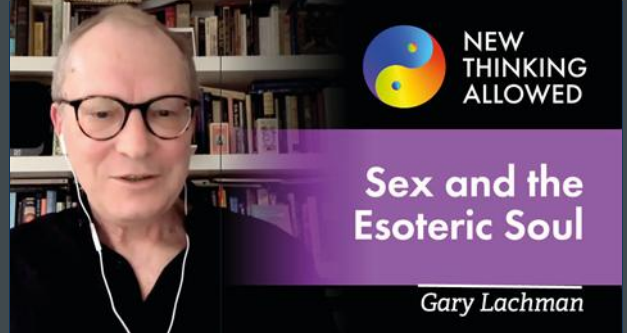
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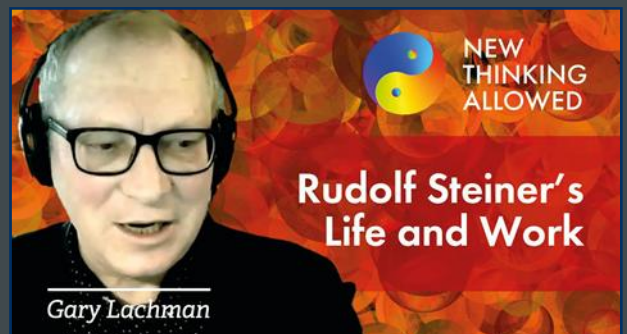
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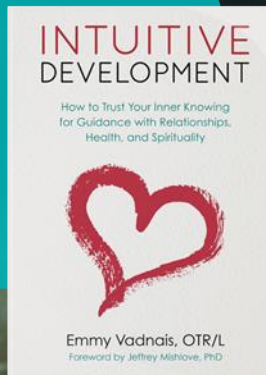


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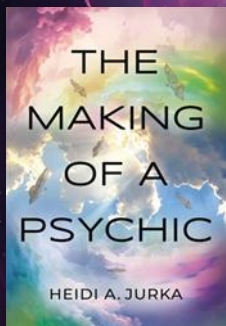


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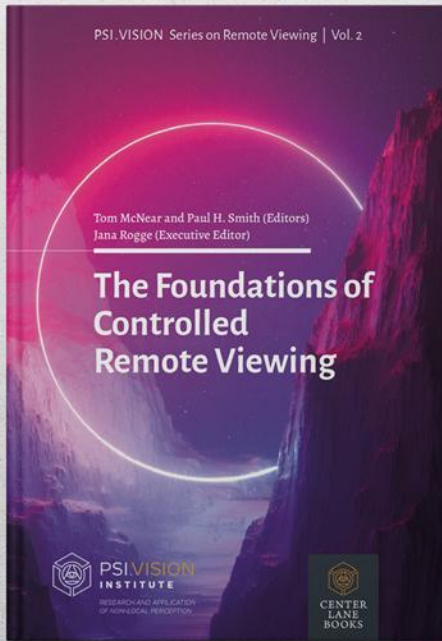
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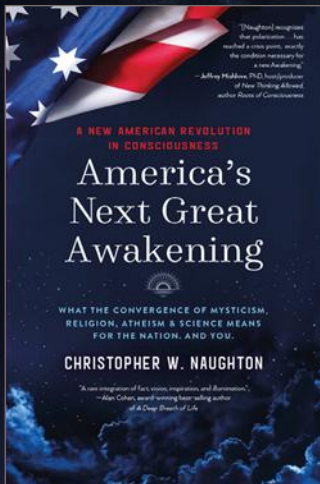
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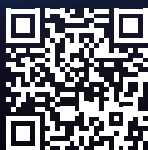
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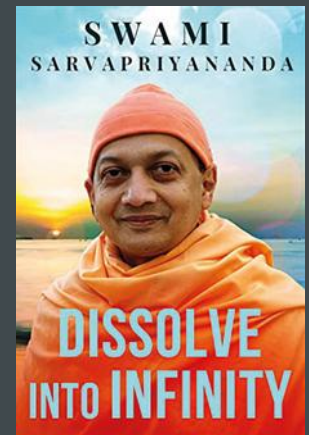
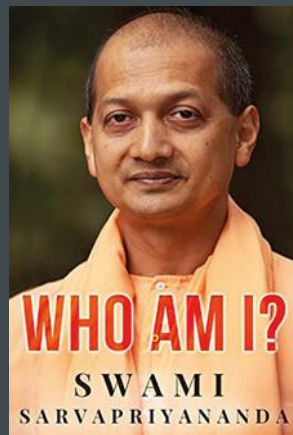
Swami Sarvapriyananda has been the Minister and spiritual leader of the Vedanta Society of New York since January 2017. He joined the Ramakrishna Math in 1994 and received sannyasa in 2004. He served as an acharya (teacher) of the monastic probationers' training center at Belur Math, India. He also served in various capacities in different educational institutes of the Ramakrishna Mission in India and as the Assistant Minister of the Vedanta Society of Southern California. During 2019–2020 he was a Nagral Fellow at the Harvard Divinity School.

Swami Sarvapriyananda is a well-known speaker on *Vedanta* and his talks are extremely popular globally via the internet. He has been a speaker on various prestigious forums such as TEDx, SAND, Google Talk etc. He has also been invited to speak at several universities across the world, including Harvard University. The swami has engaged in dialogue with many eminent

thinkers such as Deepak Chopra, Rupert Spira, Rick Archer, David Chalmers and Sam Harris.

Swami Sarvapriyananda has played a prominent role in organizing and participating in various interfaith panels and seminars, including speaking at the World Parliament of Religions in Toronto in 2018, and at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Some of Swami Sarvapriyananda's popular talks have been compiled into e-books – *Who am I?*, *What is Vedanta?*, and *Dissolve into Infinity* are currently available on Amazon Kindle.





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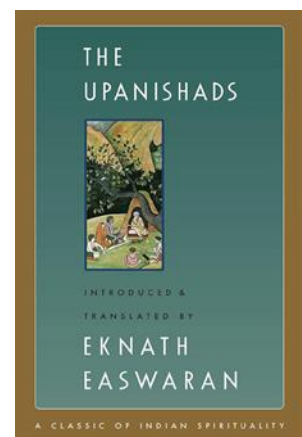
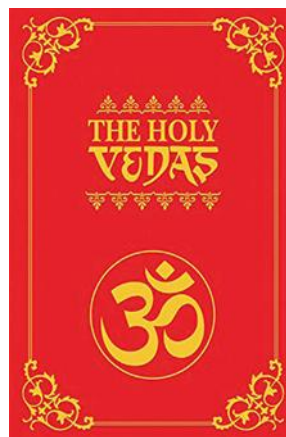
LW: Hi, I'm Leanne Whitney, guest host working alongside host Jeffrey Mishlove, co-host Emmy Vadnais and my other colleagues here at New Thinking Allowed. Today, I'm excited to welcome Swami Sarvapriyananda to the show. Swami Sarvapriyananda has been the minister and spiritual leader of the Vedanta Society of New York since January 2017. He joined the Ramakrishna Math in 1994 and received *sannyasa* in 2004. He also served in various capacities in different educational institutes of the Ramakrishna Mission in India and as the assistant minister of the Vedanta Society of Southern California. He has been invited to speak at several universities across the world, including Harvard University. He's played a prominent role in organizing and participating in various interfaith panels and seminars, including speaking at the World Parliament of Religions in Toronto in 2018 and at the United Nations headquarters in New York. Some of Swami Sarvapriyananda's popular talks have been compiled into e-books: *Who Am I?*, *What is Vedanta?*, and *Dissolve into Infinity*.

In this episode, Swami Sarvapriyananda and I discussed several aspects of Indian philosophy, including pure consciousness, knowledge, illusion, and intuition. Swamiji is joining me remotely from his office in New York. Swami Sarvapriyananda, welcome to the show today. Nice to be with you.

SS: Thank you for having me, Leanne. It's great to be here.

LW: Wonderful. I wanted to start out with *Vedanta* itself. If you could give our audience a broad definition of *Vedanta* or even a concise definition, whatever feels right for you, for those people who haven't been exposed to *Vedanta* yet.

SS: All right. I'll do both. A concise definition first, a precise technical definition, and then a broader definition. Both are helpful, actually. So, the term *Vedanta* has two parts, *Veda* and *Anta*. So, 'Veda' refers to the ancient scriptures of Hinduism, which are the foundational texts known as the Vedas. There are four Vedas in total. But also it means knowledge, just means knowledge. *To veda* means to know, *anta* means the end or the highest point or the final point. Therefore when you put *Vedanta* together, It's like the culmination of knowledge found in the final teachings of the Vedas. So *veda*, *anta* would be the final spiritual philosophical

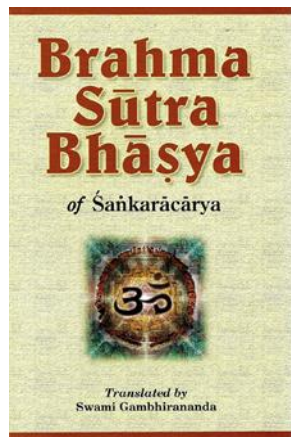
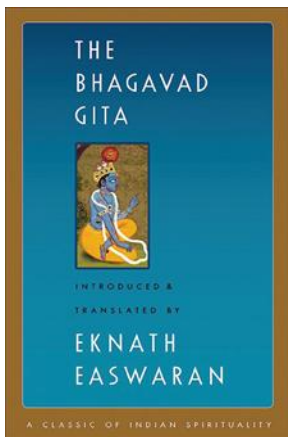


teachings of the Vedas. The definition we always memorized when we started studying *Vedanta* in a traditional Sanskrit teaching system is *Vedanta Nama Upanishad Pramana*. *Vedanta* is verily the source of spiritual knowledge called *Upanishads*.

These *Upanishads* are texts found within the *Vedas*. So the *Vedas* themselves are vast and they contain lots of stuff on ritualism, many things which are obsolete. Even in modern Hinduism, nobody refers back to those things. Now Hinduism has evolved past many of those things. But the *Upanishads* are parts of the *Vedas*, which are foundational to Hinduism.

So, when taken together, the *Upanishads* form the textual basis and foundation of *Vedanta*. So, a precise definition would be literally *Vedanta* is equal to *Upanishads*. Now there is another text that is very important to *Vedanta* and is very well known. Everybody who studied even a little bit of Hinduism always has come across the *Gita*, the *Bhagavad Gita*. The *Bhagavad Gita* is actually a text of *Vedanta*. It is a concise and practical presentation of the teachings of the *Upanishads* by Krishna to Arjuna.

LW: *Bhagavad Gita* means “Song of the Lord,” right?



SS: Yes, if you literally translate that, it means “Song of the Lord.” The third text that is foundational for *Vedanta* is the *Brahma Sutras*, which are a form of sutra literature.

The *Sutras on Brahman* are the *Sutras* on the ultimate reality. Taken together, these three texts—the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, and the *Brahma Sutras*—form the textual foundation of *Vedanta*. They are not equal: the *Upanishads* are primary, while the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Brahma Sutras* are derivative. This is the precise, textual definition of *Vedanta*.

The broader definition of *Vedanta* would be, I suppose, the spiritual philosophy of Hinduism. When you explore Hinduism, you encounter a bewildering variety of practices, images, iconography, mantras, deities, and techniques. However, behind all of this diversity lies a coherent philosophy.

Generally that philosophy is *Vedanta*. We can go deeper into it. These things always need to be qualified. But when you come across living Hinduism—if you visit Hindu communities where people practice some form of Hinduism—you will generally see that there is one or another system of *Vedanta* in the background. It is important to note that *Vedanta* is not a single system.

Based on the *Upanishads*, the *Gita* and the *Brahma Sutras*, multiple systems or schools of thought have developed over the centuries, over the millennia actually. My home tradition is one



such school, a very well-known school of *Vedanta* called *Advaita Vedanta*, the non-dual *Vedanta*. However, I want to emphasize that there are many different schools within Hinduism and *Vedanta*, including dualistic *Vedanta* and several others. So, that's the concise definition. The broader definition would be a general philosophy of Hinduism.

LW: In this general philosophy, *Brahman* is considered pure consciousness, the absolute, and God. but not a dualistic God, these are often translations of *Brahman* into English.

SS: The word *Brahman* in Sanskrit etymologically just means the vast or the limitless. *Brahman* means the vast. Yes, as you mentioned, it has multiple meanings. One meaning is actually the dualistic God. In the dualistic systems of *Vedanta*, *Brahman* is most closely analogous to God in theistic religions. So, like a personal God with all the 'omnis', you know, 'omniscient', 'omnipotent', 'omnipresent', a loving God, a God who listens to prayer, a God who is the creator, preserver and destroyer of this world, a cyclical theory of creation and projection and absorption.

So that is basically the God of religion, that is definitely one meaning of *Brahman*. But the school which we are going to talk about, the non-dual *Vedanta*, defines *Brahman* as specifically or ultimately pure consciousness or pure being.

So the ultimate reality of the universe, of ourselves, of everything is supposed to be this *Brahman*, which is BEING itself or existence itself or consciousness itself, bliss itself. Often the formula *Sat Chit Ananda* is used. *Sat* meaning pure existence or being, *Chit* meaning consciousness or pure awareness, and *Ananda* meaning bliss or pure joy.

LW: So, there is a sense of embodiedness even in the definition?

SS: I wouldn't say so. When you say 'God', there is a sense of personal God, but when we say *Sat Chit Ananda*—existence, consciousness, bliss—notice the emphasis is on pure being, pure consciousness, pure bliss. Now, what does the word 'pure' refer to here? 'Pure' not in the sense of good or nice. It means not an embodied being, but BEING itself.

LW: Yes

SS: Not a particular conscious experience, but the background consciousness that makes all conscious experiences possible. Bliss meaning not a nice feeling, but that which makes all happiness, meaning, purpose, value possible.

One way to look at it is that philosophy addresses three fundamental questions, which correspond to its three major branches. There's metaphysics or ontology which studies what's real. Is God real? Is the world real? Is matter real? Is mind real? So what's real? What's reality? *Vedanta* would say reality is *Sat*, it is 'being' itself, existence itself. The second branch of philosophy primary studies knowledge. How do you know anything at all? Epistemology. *Vedanta* says all knowledge is possible because of consciousness, *chit*. The third branch of philosophy where a lot has been put together un-



der one umbrella, is now referred to as axiology. It includes value, what used to be called ethics, what used to be called aesthetics, all of it put together. The beautiful and the good and the meaning of it all. *Vedanta* says the goal of it all, the meaning of it all is bliss or fulfillment. So one way of understanding what *Sat Chit Ananda* is, it is an answer to our most profound questions. What is real? How do we know anything at all? What's the point of it all? The answer is one reality: *Brahman*. When you analyze it further, it is being itself, consciousness itself, and bliss itself.

These are not components or parts of *Brahman*. They are the same thing basically.

LW: Pure means that it exists within itself; there is nothing outside of it. It is pure, right?

SS: Yes, true. It's not mixed. For example, when you say 'pure being', it does not mean that it's a thing. Things exist. So in the universe you have planets and stars, you have human beings and dogs and cats and all of that. It's not that *Brahman* is one more thing in this catalog of things. Is it one more thing called *Brahman*? No. It is that which appears as all things. It's like the example of golden ornaments. So if you go to a jewelry shop, you will see all kinds of ornaments, necklaces, tiaras and bracelets. If somebody tells you the reality is gold, you wouldn't go looking for one more ornament in the catalog called gold. You would know immediately: Yes, all of these are gold! Gold is basically all of these. It's in all of these ornaments, and, in fact, all of these ornaments depend on the gold for their existence. It's like that. In that sense, it's the very essence of reality itself. I mean, it sounds poetic, but one has to become a little poetic when you come to this level of analysis.

LW: Right. Absolutely. And in your system of thought, in *Advaita Vedanta*, there is a term: *Māyā*, illusion

SS: Yes.

LW: Could you give us a definition of that? Because I often find that when people come across the non-dual traditions, that sense of illusion can trip them up. I think also what you're saying is we want to be clear on where the identity comes from.

SS: Right

LW: So, if you could tell us a little bit about *Māyā*.

SS: In our system, that's the difficult question. If you talk about ultimate reality, that's easy. People will tell you. That's *Brahman*. It's limitless, existence, consciousness, bliss. They will just rattle it up. When it comes to *Māyā*, they will hem and haw and hesitate because that's the difficult one. Before that, let me just say that the central teaching of *Vedanta* or *Advaita Vedanta*, the central teaching can be elegantly put in one sentence. You are that. Or in Sanskrit, *Tattvamasi*. *Tat* means 'that' and *tvam* means 'you', the student, the individual being, the sentient being like us. You are that reality. So, this *Brahman* that we are talking about sounds awfully abstract and it is not very clear what it means. But the thing that is most familiar to us is ourselves: .. I, me, myself.

Vedanta states that the claim of *Advaita Vedanta* is this: YOU ARE BRAHMAN. You are that limitless existence, consciousness. Limitless existence, consciousness, bliss.

Now, the question arises: I am that, and I am that right now, and I have always been that and



never anything but that, if that's true, then why don't I feel it? Why does it seem so abstract? Why doesn't it seem obvious to me if I am that, and if everything is that? There *Māyā* comes in. *Māyā* is a power that obstructs our realization of what we truly are and projects that same *Brahman*, our real nature, as this individual being, as Leanne or Sarvapriyananda, other people, and also as this material world. So *Māyā* does two things: *Māyā* is that power which obscures *Brahman*, our real nature, and projects it. It makes it seem as if we are these limited beings in this world, inhabiting a separate, different material world. Whereas the truth would be, according to *Advaita Vedanta*, that you are limitless existence, consciousness, bliss right now.

This world, which seems to be a diverse material world, is actually one with you. There is an underlying oneness which is that same *Brahman*. Why doesn't it seem so? Why does it seem so difficult to wrap our minds around this? The answer is *Māyā*. It's not negative because, although it may currently seem to be the source of our problems, when we become enlightened and awaken to our true nature, we will see *Māyā* as beautiful. It is that which enables us to enjoy *Brahman* in all these diverse forms. It's what makes life possible.

LW: Yes, and mentioning the “Song of the Lord,” the *Bhagavad Gita*, that it's a core text of the philosophical system, and love, *Bhakti Yoga*, the *Yogas of devotion*, is it possible that we can't wrap our mind around it because the whole body does need to understand it? It's that the heart is a key component to actually the understanding in and of itself?

SS: You are so right. In that last part, you said that the heart is the key component. It's so interesting that in the original texts, in the *Upanishads*, you

find we're talking about the intellect, the *Buddhi*, the intellect, which is often referred to as the heart, and we get around it usually by saying, oh, they are talking about the thinking, the understanding, but no, they are very clear about it.

A monk who recently visited us, drew this very subtle distinction. When we are using the intellect, we are thinking, we are analyzing, we are trying to understand, but our deepest convictions about ourselves and the world, they are more a matter of the heart than an intellectual conception. So it's quite possible that we may read stuff, listen to lectures, and even understand it intellectually, but not accept it at the heart level. What *Advaita Vedanta* tries to do or the Yoga of Knowledge tries to do is in fact to question our deepest, most cherished ideas, about most unquestioned ideas about who we are and what this world is at the deepest possible level, at the most radical level, and tries to change that, tries to correct it.

I'll back up a little. You mentioned the Yoga of Devotion. I mentioned the Yoga of Knowledge. I think it's good to just put it out there.

One way of talking about the path to become enlightened. So now we have *Brahman*, the ultimate reality, and *Māyā*, which obscures our knowledge of that ultimate reality, and *Vedanta* saying that you are that ultimate reality. Now naturally the question will come up: “How do I realize that, if I am that?” In order to realize that, and that would be called awakening or enlightenment, you need paths, you need methods, procedures. There are many, many ... There is a tremendous diversity of views and paths in Hinduism. Broadly, Swami Vivekananda, I think, the founder of the Vedanta Society where I am seated right now, is the one who really authentically brought Hinduism to the West in the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893. He



made an attempt at classifying all these diverse paths of practice into four broad paths. There's the path of knowledge or the Yoga of Knowledge—Yoga meaning a path which connects us to the divine or takes us to realization or enlightenment. So there's the Yoga of Knowledge, in Sanskrit *Gyana Yoga*. There's the Yoga of Devotion, in Sanskrit *Bhakti Yoga*. There's the Yoga of Meditation, in Sanskrit *Rāja Yoga* or *Dhyana Yoga*. Then there's the Yoga of Action, of Service, *Karma Yoga*. So Vivekananda said by any one of these Yogas, one can become enlightened, or by more of these, or by all of these, harmonizing all of these in our lives. So, these are the paths.

LW: Yeah, there are many paths, but one realization. Enlightenment is an interesting word. Because pure consciousness is already there—absolute and the true existence. So it's more of cleaning out the obstructions or cleaning the lens of perception, but the light sitting in itself as consciousness really is already there. So I find enlightenment is an interesting term in and of itself, whereas it's a realization.

SS: Yes.

LW: Do you know where I'm going with that? Do you see where I'm going with that?

SS: Right. Actually, you know, that reminds me of Vivekananda. He said all that we can do is polish the mirror. Yes, you are right. In one sense, it's a negative approach because you are already that. So all you have to do is remove the obstruction that prevents us from seeing or realizing it in our lives. In this way of thinking, this whole enlightenment approach is to become enlightened about



what we already are and what things already are in their real nature. In the path of knowledge, this would be put in as a moment of intuitive realization, a breakthrough, which would lead to realizing that: "Oh, I am not just this person." The person is there. I'm not just this body or just this mind or this body- mind personality, Sarvapriyananda. I am awareness. I am limitless awareness. I am always fulfilled.

I am being itself. I am *Brahman*, or in Sanskrit, *Aham Brahmasmi*. So this shift in the identity of the "I"—what I believed in my deepest, most unexamined, and most cherished beliefs—was that I was this. That's all I am. But this is a radical shift which happens. I realized my real nature, that was always there. This shift is enlightenment. One Swami, I heard this recently, a monk put it humorously, he used the word enlightenment in two senses: One is enlightenment in the sense of light, illumination. It dawns upon us. It's like a veil lifting. It's an intuitive flash in which you realize, "Oh, this is what it is." In that sense, it is enlightenment. But in another sense, enlightenment—lightening up—means it lightens your burden. Like Jesus says in the gospel, "Come unto me ye that are heavy laden." So the burden of life, of *samsara*, that is gone when you become enlightened. That's the first result of this. You are literally lighter, tremendously so. So, yeah, that's an interesting word.





LW: Yeah, it definitely is. I think especially in the US, I don't know if you find this, having lived here for a while and taught here, the mind can try to grasp. And grasping after enlightenment isn't really the direction that we want to go. It's a release. The practices are important. Maybe you could speak to that because it is a cleaning of the lens, a purification of the lens. So if consciousness is pure. It sits inside itself. There is no other. It's matching the lens to that or cleaning the lens. So there's a clear view into that. The practices can be extremely helpful, but not the grasping after enlightenment, just showing up and doing the practices. Can you share more about that?

SS: Right. You are taking it to the subtlest level right now. Let me back up there and just note that the very fact that enlightenment and people are seeking it and are trying to grasp it, all that's actually very encouraging because I look back to a hundred plus years when *Vivekananda* first came here and we talked about God realization or self realization. It was basically new to large numbers of people because most people thought religion meant believing in stuff and trying to be a good person. Then you get your reward at death or hopefully after death, you go to a nice place, a heaven.

Nobody thought too much about it, but that you could make it a living reality in this life here and now and live spirituality. That was either not

considered an option at all, or perhaps those who thought about it believed it was only for a special category of people, like saints, and not for the majority. However, everyone can and should be spiritual; everyone can and should aspire to self-realization, God realization, enlightenment—whatever you call it.

This has become mainstream in America now over the last hundred plus years and that is very encouraging. That is tremendously encouraging. It's a silent revolution. I mean to have thousands and millions of people honestly, sincerely seeking after enlightenment. What a great thing that is—not just seeking after money, pleasure, power, or entertainment, but seeking enlightenment. In India, since ancient times, this has been seen as the acme of civilization: the ultimate goal of life, the reason we are here, and why this universe exists. It is the best aspiration and the noblest life one can pursue—the search for enlightenment.

Okay, having said that, what you are pointing to is a subtle point. Now, we have all these paths. People set out on this journey with vigor and enthusiasm, as if they are pursuing a degree, trying to become rich, or establishing a relationship and raising a family. We often view this as just one more project. Now, that's not bad. It keeps us on track and turning up for the practice. If it's your meditation practice, your devotional practices, your philosophical inquiries into *who am I*.

But what you said is, at its core, there is always the possibility of a huge, huge misunderstanding. The misunderstanding is this, that there is something unachieved which I have to achieve. There is something that I have to reach, some tremendous change that has to come around here, and that would be enlightenment. Now, it's not that, it's not an attainment, it's not a transformation,



those things will happen. But at its core, it's not that. We say in *Vedanta*, spirituality is not a journey from one place to ... it's not from here to somewhere, like a heaven or some other world.

It's not a journey in space, not going somewhere. It's not a journey in time, not from now to some other time. After death, or after the coming of the next avatar or messiah or somebody, or after I get *Samadhi*, meditative absorption, no after death. It's not a journey in time. It's not even a journey from I, me, myself to something else. It's not a journey from one object to another, from the subject to some other object. No. It's right here, it's right now, and it is you. When we do become enlightened, we will not say: "Oh, now I have got it. There is this *Brahman* which I did not have, and now I have got it. Done, I can tick the box." No. We will see it was always there. It was blindingly obvious, and somehow by this incredible thing, that's why it's called *Māyā*, "I never really saw this." So that would be enlightenment. Why is it like that? I mean, I can make it even more precise.

Why is it like that? Why does this problem come up, grasping? It's because of this—I always love this story. I always tell this story at this point. The old Indian story of the 'Tenth Man'. So these ten friends cross a river, and after having crossed a river, they think: "Did we all cross or did somebody drown? Are we all here?" They start counting. One of them counts: "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. Oh my God, where's the tenth man?" And everybody: "Let me count, let me count," and they all find nine people. Obviously, they're not counting themselves. They start crying. "The tenth man is dead, our friend has drowned." A wise man passes by and says: "Why are you crying, my friends? They say: "Look, we crossed the river, and our friend drowned." "How do you know?" "Well,

there were ten of us, and there are nine now. We counted, sir." So this man must have realized what was going on, and he said: "Don't cry, the tenth man is there." This is where the guru comes, our spiritual traditions tell us: "Don't cry, it is all right, it's going to be all right."

They say: "How?" "Well, I'll show you, count." They say: "Be counted." "Humor me, count again." "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. I told you, nine people." This man comes and turns the counter's hand around and says: "Ten. You are the ten." In Sanskrit, *Tvam Dashama Asi*, you are the tenth. This man goes: "Oh, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. Oh, ten. I found it. I found the tenth person." They all try counting and they all find the tenth person. They're very happy.

Now, that's a very profound story in terms of self-realization. If you ask, why didn't they find the tenth man? Immediately the answer would be because they didn't count themselves. They counted others. Now, the question, the next question would be, why did they not count themselves? Why did they count only the others? The reason is because everybody else is outside. The others, the first nine are 'others'. You can count them separately. The tendency arises in the mind to seek the tenth man outside. It's a very reasonable tendency. I found those nine guys outside. The tenth guy also should be outside. He should be standing there. I should be able to count that guy.

Throughout our lives, the only kind of knowing and experiencing we are accustomed to involves objects—people, places, gadgets, movies, and even more subtle things. When we look inwards, when we introspect, of thoughts, of feelings, of ideas, memories, these are all the nine persons. They are all objects. Even what we call insight is an object. The definition of an object is something you are



aware of, simple and elegant definition. Anything that you can experience. Have you experienced God? It's considered an object if you have experienced it. So, anything that you can experience is an object.

But what we often forget is that there is something that is experiencing all of this. Something that is illumining all of this. Something to which all of this is appearing. Someone to whom the nine are appearing. That one is not one of those nine. That one is not outside. That one you can't objectify as, you know, nine and ten out there. You can't do that. The result is, in our spiritual life also, we keep doing that. So we are now looking for, okay, I'm not the mind, I'm peaceful, I'm quiet and calm. Now we wait for *Brahman*, *Atman*, the Buddha nature, something to come. It never comes. It cannot because it's already there. It's that which is illumining your whole spiritual practice. *You are it*. The only way you can do it is that subtle turn. Ten. You know, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, that intuitive turn, that self-reflexive. Self-reflexive is a dirty word in philosophy, so you can't use it.

But that inward turn, let us say. Somebody put it very beautifully. It's a Y-O-U-turn. Not a U-turn, but a Y-O-U-turn, a YOU-turn or a Me-turn. Once you've got it, you've got it. Vivekananda used to say that, you know, you have seen these trick pictures. So it looks like a mass of dots, but somebody tells you that it's a forest with a tiger hidden behind it. You look and look and look and then suddenly you see the face of the tiger. Once you've seen it, you can't miss it. The next time someone shows it to you, you'll immediately recognize it. In that sense, once you've seen it—"I am that awareness, always have been and will be,"—then you can't miss it. Then it's done.

But all the practices, whether it's devotion, whether it is meditation, whether it's self-inquiry, indeed even selfless engagement with society, they are very helpful.

LW: Just to make this point again, what I hear you saying is the distinction between the seer and the seen or the distinction between awareness and what we're aware of, between pure consciousness and the contents of consciousness. Because a lot of time in Euro-American culture, we think thoughts are consciousness. Whereas what you're really bringing home here is this distinction between the pure awareness and anything you can see or perceive. If it's perceivable, at least for a time on the journey, then you want to put those in different categories because you want to get that distinction down. Once you've gotten that distinction down, maybe the next part of the path shows itself.

SS: Right. That's a lot to unpack what you just said. The seer and the seen, that's one way of doing it. In the first pass at this, we see that it's very clear we are not the world. It's common sense. I'm not the table. I'm not the computer. Even though I can see my face in the computer, I am not the computer. I'm not even that face in the computer. They're all objects to me. But when it comes to the body, we fumble there because we can say it's my body. It's an object. I can see it. Yet sometimes I say "I am this." So that's where the *Vedantic* analysis really takes root. First of all, we work on the sense of identification with the body and we see the body as much a thing as the table and the chair and the computer. Then we go further, as you said, in our thoughts, in our modern thinking, especially in the Western world, we think consciousness and mind are the same thing.



In fact, if you look at consciousness studies, which is a very hot topic among academicians, scientists, computer scientists today, consciousness studies, what they are actually studying is the mind. So when they talk about consciousness studies, they're talking about thoughts and perceptions and memory and pain and pleasure, sense of ego. All of this is the mind. Someone might ask, "How would you distinguish?" Remember the criterion which I mentioned earlier. Anything that you can become aware of is a thing, is an object. It's not awareness. So can I become aware of my own thoughts? Of course one can. That's what is called introspection. You can analyze, you can look into your own thoughts. When we look into our own thoughts, thoughts are objects too. That is not consciousness. It's an appearance to consciousness as much as a rock is, as much as a table is. A table or a rock are solid, are external objects or what were called in Sanskrit *sthula*, gross objects.

Thoughts and perceptions, ideas, memories, these are called subtle objects, but they are objects nevertheless. They are not consciousness. In this way, when we come to a clarity about what consciousness is, for example, a very subtle point here. Consciousness is the witness of all thoughts, of all subtle and gross objects.

At this point someone might think, someone might ask, "Isn't it just the mind thinking? Why are you making a distinction between mind and consciousness? Isn't it the mind thinking about itself?"

"Oh I am the witness of this thought," that's also a thought. There is no such thing as a separate witness or a consciousness. The answer would be, even when you are not thinking about it, even when you are not doing any spirituality, you are just involved in life, you are working or relaxing or



whatever and have not the slightest idea of spiritual inquiry in your mind. At that time also you are aware. At that time also, even when we are not thinking about awareness, we are not even thinking about the mind, we are still aware, still it's a conscious experience. So, it's not the mind thinking about itself.

Suppose when the mind stops thinking, *Vedanta* would go so far as to say, when the mind stops thinking in deep meditation or in deep sleep; or go further, in anesthesia; or go further, in coma; *Vedanta* would say, you're still as conscious as you are right now. Only the objects of consciousness have disappeared. That's why it seems to be completely black—a blank. So in the first stage, as you said, in the first stage of the *Vedantic* inquiry, one needs to appreciate awareness or consciousness for what it is. I am that. Bare awareness or bare consciousness. But then the second stage of the path, let us say, opens up. Here I would make a distinction between the *Sankhya* and the *Yoga* philosophy and the non-dual *Advaita* philosophy. The *Sankhya* and the *Yoga* philosophy are primarily dualistic. They will stop here. You are awareness. Everything else is an object to you. Everything else, they'll put under the umbrella of *Prakriti* or nature. You are awareness. They call it *Purusha*, consciousness itself. That's it. It's done. Now you have to live it. *Vedanta* would still ask a further question. *Vedanta* would say, well, what's the relationship between you, the bare





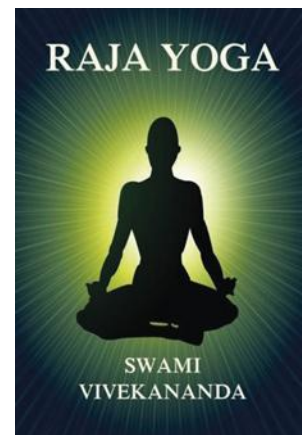
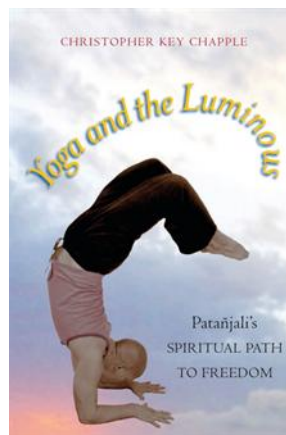
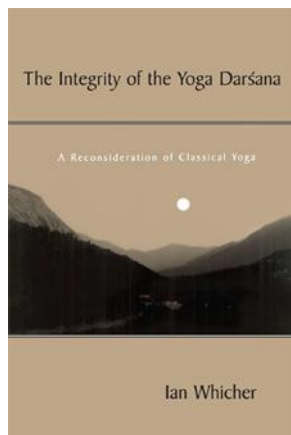
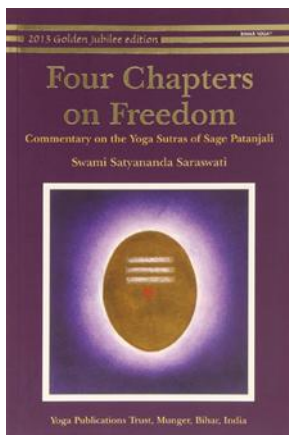
awareness, consciousness, *Atman*, whatever you call it, and all these objects, this mind, this body, this world—what are they in relation to you, the consciousness? Are they really separate or are they one with you in some way?

Vedanta comes to that latter conclusion that actually what you, we, separated ourselves from in our quest for pure consciousness, and we found it, what pure consciousness is. Now, when we look back upon the world and the body and the mind, we realize these are all the radiance of that same consciousness. It's actually one reality, not two distinct realities, not a spiritual reality and a material reality. Rather, the whole of it is a spiritual reality. This is non-dualism because there's no duality. There's no duality of spirit and matter. There's no duality of subject and object. It is the subject itself which appears as its own object.

LW: Right, right. Again, sitting inside itself. I love that. A lot of people do get put off by the term pure. But for me, it just means there is no other. It's pure because it sits inside itself. I just want to share with you, I'm a longtime studier of Yoga. I've read many, many translations. But one of the first translations I ever read was: *Four Chapters on Freedom* by Swami Saraswati. He actually reads Yoga through a more *Vedantic* lens. So he actually sees Yoga in a non-dual way. I went on to read several other scholars who also see Yoga that way.

One thing I want to mention here is the final Sutra, 434, where Patanjali uses the feminine gender. You know, he talks about *Shakti* and consciousness sitting inside itself. So, there are scholars out there, not all of them. I think from the Orthodox Hindu perspective, *Yoga* and *Sankhya* are almost seen as separate schools. There's the six Orthodox Hindu philosophies. *Sankhya* and *Yoga* are definitely distinguished. But it's often paired with *Sankhya* as a form of radical dualism. But again, one of my first teachers or the first book I read sees it more through a *Veda*, *Vedantic* lens.

SS: Absolutely. Swami Vivekananda came to the



West in 1893, then he came to New York in 1894. Later on, he went on to write his first book, *Raja Yoga*, which is his commentary on the Patanjali *Yoga Sutras*. He does exactly that. He takes a *Vedantic* reading of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, not a radical dualism, though he acknowledges that. But the way he chooses to interpret it is as a oneness. Yes, that has been done. You're right. Though technically *Sankhya* and *Yoga* share the same dualistic worldview, often yogic meditation has been paired with *Vedantic* non-dual philosophy.

So non-dualists, *Vedantic* non-dualists will often use Yogic meditation techniques. Once you have studied it, once you have a clarity that I am this awareness, still the mind has to be tuned to it and has to be, let's put it this way, soaked in it, in this new clarity. Only then the actual work of transformation at the mental level takes place. Look, in one sense, the material world is the material world. *Atman*, *Brahman*, pure consciousness is fine.

But the problem is the conjunction of the two. We are at this junction of "I am pure consciousness." But also, right now, I cannot deny that I am embodied. There is a body. I may not *be* the body, but there is a body. There is a personality and there is a life to be lived. I may realize I am limitless consciousness, but then I still have to come back and lead this life.

There's this nice saying, I think: In spiritual life, you have to go away, but you have to come back, too. So you can go away to *Atman*, *Brahman*, all you want, but you have to come back to Leanne and Sarva Priyananda and the lives that we lead. Now, the test is this: That going away, can you bring back that light—the Promethean fire—back into this life? *Vedanta* and *Madhyamaka* Buddhism, or some schools of *Mahayana*, most schools of *Mahayana* Buddhism, make this distinction between two le-

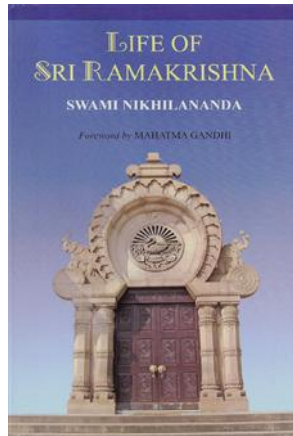
vels of truth. The absolute truth, which in this case would be *Brahman*, *Atman*, pure being, pure consciousness, and the relative truth, which would be this life, body, mind, world, work, enjoyment, suffering, life, death, this is relative truth.

Now, if we confine ourselves to the relative truth, which most people do, because there's no inkling of anything higher, it leads straight to materialism, and it leads to *Samsara*, it leads to suffering, and that's where we are. But if you try to confine yourself only to the absolute truth, then one tends to neglect this manifestation, which is a manifestation of the absolute. So you're taking one side of the absolute and neglecting the other side of the absolute. One great Tibetan Buddhist master, Tsongkhapa, noted that about 500 years ago, the monks of the Tibetan Plateau dwelt too much on the concept of emptiness. He noted that it led to a metaphysical nihilism, that nothing exists. It led to skepticism in knowledge, doubting everything, and it led to a relativity in ethics, a looseness in monastic life.

So the importance of both, of going away, of realizing that you are *Brahman*, and then coming back and shedding light, using that illumination to live a much better life here, tremendously transformed, at least inner transformation.

LW: I'm so glad that you brought up the ethics, because again, as a long-term follower of *Patanjali Yoga*, the *Yamas*, I mean the nonviolence, truth, non-stealing, ethics are a really important part of the yogic or *Vedanta* path when it comes to, again, cleaning the lens of perception. Could we call it an alignment? Alignment between the functional organizing principle, or alignment with the lens, with the light. Something like that. It's an alignment between the more gross, embodied nature and pure





consciousness. It's relational, I think is another way we could say it. The mind is embodied and it is relational. The nervous system is such an important part of *Pranayama* and *Yoga Asana*.

Again, key practices on the path, because our nervous system is also indicative of the comfortable seat that we're taking in the body, which allows us to, maybe you could share your point of view on that. I would say that taking the comfortable seat, and now we're talking about Patanjali like 246, 247, 248, taking a comfortable seat in the body, he says, is beyond the dualities. No we're beyond the dualities. So there is something very relational, ultimately, I think. To get caught in the nihilism is really, maybe it's a turn of certain schools of *Vedanta*. I'm not sure. It's not my preferred turn. So I love where this conversation is going.

SS: First and foremost, as you mentioned, the importance of ethics. To put it bluntly, no God without good. So without goodness, you cannot have spirituality. Ethics first, the ground worth of ethics first, and then spiritual life. One can't skip over that particular step. So you have the *Yamas* and *Niyamas* in the *Ashtanga Yoga* of Patanjali. In *Vedanta*, we have the fourfold qualification in which they talk about the six treasures: *Shama*, *Dama*, which is basically control of the mind, control of the senses, the disciplining of the body, mind, especially the nervous system, as you mentioned. Because it's one continuum. One can't. If you don't take care of it at this end, and you want to take care of it only at that end, it won't work. So this will disturb us so much

that it will never allow us to go there or settle down there.

Even if someone does, through study and practice, get an intuition of the truth, call it pure consciousness or I am *Brahman*, whatever it is. But if the ethical side of it has not been taken care of to a great extent, to a high level of excellence, it will prevent us from manifesting that intuition, from living it. So first of all, on our journey towards enlightenment or towards the higher reaches of the spiritual mountain, lack of ethics will prevent us from going there at all. If by some way we manage to reach something, we get some genuine breakthrough, lack of ethics. That means ... I'm not referring to immoral or bad people, but rather to good people who haven't taken enough care to become even better. That will prevent us from manifesting that realization. That's why you hear about these Yogis, these gurus or spiritual masters who suddenly seem to morally slip from the spiritual path.

A gap seems to open up between what they are claiming to be and what they actually are in their lives. It's not that it spoils what they claim to be. They might genuinely have had breakthroughs. This has been known in India from ancient times. Just because one has a *Samadhi*, just because one has a vision of the truth, doesn't mean the journey is complete.

Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda's guru, often would say: "Go forward, go forward." He gave the example of a woodcutter whose guru told him, go deeper into the forest. Then this poor woodcutter finds a forest of sandalwood, which is very expensive, becomes rich. But then he realized that the guru didn't tell him to stop there. He said, go forward. He goes forward and he finds a silver mine, then he finds a gold mine, then he finds a diamond mine. But these are metaphors to push forward in



spiritual life. So ethical foundation is absolutely important there. *Yamas* and *Niyamas* are the disciplines of *Advaita Vedanta*, the preliminary disciplines. No God without the good.

LW: Yes, very, very important. There's many aspects, right? Because you hear non-duality or I am that. But without a deep study of the system of thought, then these finer points can get missed.

SS: Right.

LW: You can't co-opt it. You can't just co-opt I am that. That's why the nervous system, the comfortable seat in the body. Again, the identity doesn't want to be with the body, but the body can give indications, I think we could say. Or the purity of the heart, the godness that you're saying, the service, the service to the world, the ability to be truthful.

SS: Absolutely. You're absolutely right. So, on this path, you know, one can convince oneself, especially on the *Advaitic* path, not so much on the *Yogic* path. On the *Yogic* path, there's a lot to be done in the progressive stages of development. On the *Advaitic* path, one might just listen to talks and read a few books and sit quietly for a while. Within weeks, months or within a few years, think that I'm enlightened. I've got it.

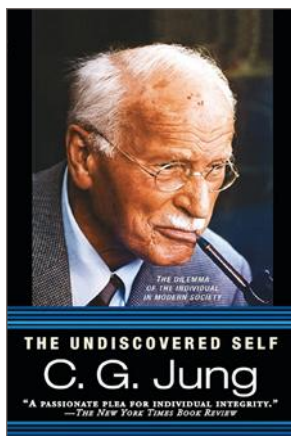
I am pure consciousness. Then what happens is the results are not good. Either life teaches us. Life is a hard taskmaster. So we get enough kicks and blows in life and we realize it isn't working. Whatever I thought I was, I'm this pure consciousness. But no, I'm still the same old, as somebody said, you're still the same dude. So I react in the same way to life. When people are nasty to me, I react with anger or unhappiness. When there is physical pain,



when there are problems around me, I react with the same suffering and grumbling and complaining. That shows me what I thought of as spirituality did not work. Because the claim of spirituality is or *Advaita Vedanta* claims it transcends, helps you to transcend suffering, helps you to attain fulfillment. If I'm clearly not able to transcend my personal suffering, if I'm clearly not feeling fulfilled, something did not work. If I feel that, that's good.

It's a blessing from life. It's an indicator that I have to be up and doing and follow that, go forward, go forward. What might happen, what's worse, what might happen sometimes and does happen is a new term for a spiritual bypassing. So, some time may be lost, valuable time may be lost, and I fool myself into thinking I'm fine. Things are good. I'm enlightened or I'm very close at least. I don't tell anybody, but internally I believe that I am enlightened. So it's good. My state of mind matches what the books say. No, no, no. It's best not to claim enlightenment, even if you're enlightened. It's dangerous to claim enlightenment when you are not enlightened. Even if you're spiritually very advanced, if you say that, "No, I'm just a seeker and I'm on the path just like everybody else," no harm is done. You go ahead on your path and you are helpful to others. On the other hand, if I say, "Well, I am enlightened and I'm not," then that stops my further progress and allows me to delude myself. I can actually cause harm to others also, people who might be taken in





by my conviction because I do believe it. So I speak with strength and conviction. Of course, what I'm speaking about, it's the message of the *Upanishads*. It's the message of the *Yoga Sutras*, of the *Bhagavad Gita*. It's the truth, actually. It's the deepest truth about everybody. So if I, even without being enlightened, even without being sufficiently spiritually advanced, if I just talk the talk and I talk it convincingly, because it is the truth that at some deep level, people respond to it, but then they see the shortcomings. They see that there's a great difference between this person's life and the talk he talks. That's very shocking to a lot of people.

LW: Yes, I actually, by degree, I'm a Jungian depth psychologist. I don't know if you're familiar with Carl Jung at all, but shadow work is a big part of what we do in depth psychology to always be aware of the personal shadow, where our own misunderstandings or ignorance lie.

Jung encouraged people absolutely to study Eastern thought, but never to move the intuitive self or to grasp after further than one's own development of one's shadow. At least in Yoga, the *Samskaras*, the *Vāsanās*, the habit patterns of the mind. It's interesting because we have to be aware of those habit patterns. It does seem that spiritual bypass is also possible. So then like a dissociation happens and that's ... we don't want that either. So, it's always about the willingness to be aware. "Oh, look at that—my repetitive anger or my repetitive jealousy," or if there's any, again, *Vāsanās*, *Samskaras*, or we would call them complexes and depth psy-

chology. It's being aware and owning up and being able to transform or gain insight into those patterns because ultimately they can be integrated. But you have to see it first. You have to be aware.

SS: If we do suffer and if the universe does send us these messages, they are blessings, actually. I mean, they can be shocking because they show that I am not really... there yet. I have not progressed as much as I thought I was. I thought I was an enlightened, *Jivan Mukta*, a Buddha in the making. I'm not. I'm still the same dude. That can be shocking and disappointing, but it's a blessing, really. It opens up the door to keep on working on myself and make genuine progress. At least I'm at it. I'm on the path. This is the finest, the best thing that one can, the path that one can work on. Yeah.

LW: Yeah, that's a great frame. So I do want to take us into that idea of the *Ritambhara Prajñā*, because I know we're getting towards the close here. If you could offer the definition of *Ritambhara* and then also *Prajñā*.

SS: *Pragnya* (from Indic tradition) means wisdom. It refers to the wisdom of one's own spiritual self, one's spiritual nature, and the nature of all things. Let me speak about the corresponding idea of final, fullest enlightenment from the *Advaitic* perspective. It is called *Brahmakara Vritti*. *Brahmakara Vritti* means the final moment of realization of enlightenment of the nature of *Brahman*. *Vritti* is knowledge, whatever experience we are having, like *Chitta Vritti*, for example. So whatever is going on in the mind, that's *Vritti*.

But this is a special *Vritti*, which comes through long inquiry into who am I, the inquiry into the *Advaitic* text. We realize that I'm not the body, I'm not



the *Prana*, I'm not the mind or the intellect. I am awareness itself. Then this awareness, this is what shines forth as the mind, intellect, *Prana*, body and indeed the entire universe. The whole universe is one with this awareness, which I am. This final, non-dual realization in Sanskrit, it is called *Aham Brahmasmi*, I am *Brahman*. This is called *Brahmakara Vritti*, which is the corresponding thing to the *Ritambhara Vritti* there. Then one realizes that this *Brahman* is the reality, the world is its shadow or appearance and I am that *Brahman*.

How is this different from any other kind of knowing? Is it like any other kind of seeing, thinking? No, it's very different. The precise technical difference is this: In ordinary knowing, so suppose I'm seeing this book, I'm looking at this book. So light comes and falls on the book and is reflected to my eyes and then it's processed through the optic nerves, goes to the brain. Somehow, nobody knows yet how, even latest neuroscience can't tell us. The last final subtle processing in the brain are somehow presented to the mind. In the mind it sets up a *Vritti*, a *Vritti* about that book. There is consciousness in the mind. Pure consciousness is reflected in the mind. This reflected consciousness in the mind illumines that *Vritti*, the *Vritti* about the book. I have the experience, I know this book or I see this book. "Oh, that's a book." So this is knowledge. This is the way we have ordinary knowledge. We see, hear, smell, taste, touch. We think, we remember, we understand. All of it is this. A *Vritti* in the mind, illumined by the reflected consciousness. The consciousness, which is pure consciousness, which is channeled or reflected in the mind. Now, what is this *Brahmakara Vritti*, the moment of enlightenment? Here is where it all becomes very clear. This objectifying tendency. One might think that, so instead of a book, now I know *Brahman*. Earlier I

was knowing a book. I was seeing this book. Now it is somehow, in place of the book, there will be *Brahman*. There will be a *Vritti* about *Brahman*. The consciousness in the mind will reveal *Brahman*. I know *Brahman*.

That's not what is going to happen. All our spiritual practices, our meditations, our enquiries, will attune the mind in such a way that it's sort of aligned with our real nature. Our real nature illumines that aligned mind. It does not wait for the mind to illumine. It's like, one beautiful example is, the moon and the earth and the sun. So at night, it is the moon which illumines the earth. We see things in the world because of moonlight. But the moonlight is reflected sunlight. The moon is like the mind. In fact, in *Vedanta*, the moon is the symbol for the mind. The sun is the symbol for pure consciousness. So it's sunlight reflected from the moon which illumines the world at night as moonlight.

But now suppose it's a solar eclipse. So what happens in a solar eclipse is, the moon comes between the earth and the sun. The sunlight falls on the moon, but it's not getting reflected to the earth. Rather, it's reflected back towards the sun. Now would you say the moonlight is illumining the sun? No. The sunlight is illumining the moon and the sunlight is illumining everything, including the sun itself. The sun is what is called self-luminous in that sense. So at the moment of *Brahmakara Vritti* and *Ritambhara Prajna*, there are technical differences, but I won't go into this. It's like the moon reflecting the sunlight back, not towards the earth, but back towards the sun. That reflected light does not illumine the sun. The sun reveals itself. So our real nature, pure consciousness, reveals itself as indeed it is doing all the time, but we don't see it.

The whole point of spiritual practice, both meditation and inquiry, is to align the mind in such



a way it's like the moon reflecting sunlight back to the sun. It's not the reflected sunlight from the moon which reveals the sun, but the sun revealing itself, shining forth with a million times more light than the moon can possibly reflect back. This is a good example. Having realized that, then one has to, of course, live it. Post-*Ritambhara Prajna*, post-*Brahmakara Vritti*.

LW: Wonderful, wonderful explanation using the sun and the moon. I often teach that way myself. I think it's a great way to use nature to explain and bring the metaphor about. Is there something to the cosmic order in that? *Ritam*, what is the definition of *Ritam*?

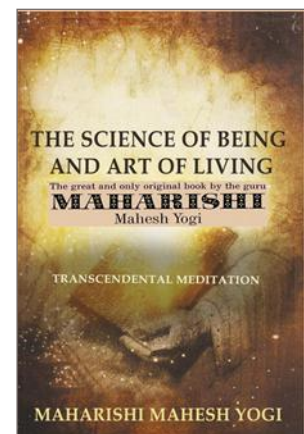
SS: *Ritam*, yes, *Ritam* has multiple meanings, but what you are referring to is a Vedic use of the term *Ritam*, which means cosmic order. So, yes, this world is a manifestation of *Brahman*, but that's not the end of the story. There is something of that ultimate reality reflected in the world, in the way nature functions, in the way our bodies function, in the way our minds function. The more we live our lives according to that cosmic order or *Ritam*, the more we are in harmony with nature, with our lives, with our own karma, the easier it is to become spiritually enlightened. The more we are in dissociation with or in denial of this flow of nature, of this flow of this universe, the order of the universe, the more I would say this harmonious our living is at the physical level, at the *pranic* level, at our thoughts. That leads to all sorts of problems. At the physical level, it might lead to diseases. At the mental level, it might lead to emotional upheavals and unhappiness. At the intellectual level, it leads to a wrong idea about what I am and what the world is. So all these problems come about that *Ritam*. *Ri-*

tam ... its translation would be cosmic order or cosmic harmony. That's the reflection of the ultimate reality in the mirror of the universe, let's say.

LW: It's also reminding me, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi would often teach a certain *Veda* where what's disclosed, because again, that's *Śruti*, which we didn't go into, but that perhaps for another time, this idea of seeing, again, it's perceiving. Knowledge is structured in consciousness. So wisdom, intelligence, knowledge, guidance, I don't know if there's anything further to say there, because again, as a longtime follower of Patanjali, Chapter 3, *Vibhuti Pada*, the capacity to see through non-dual perception, clairaudience, clairvoyance. So there's a way beyond dualistic eyesight, so to speak, again, the object. I think it's *Anubhava* or a vision from the inside. Now, you're sort of inside.

But as we close out here, I don't know if there's anything you could add.

SS: That's a beautiful way of closing it, because it's embodying that wisdom. It's true. In the *Yoga Sutras*, you talk about *Ritambhara Prajna*, about *Viveka Khyati*, the ultimate breakthroughs which you get in spiritual life, and you realize your pure consciousness. In *Vedanta*, you talk about *Brahmakara Vritti*, the realization that I am *Brahman*. That's all good, and that's the whole point of spiritual life. However, as you said, the Rishis of the *Śruti*, *Śruti* means that which was heard. The *Vedas* are called *Śruti*,



because originally it was transmitted orally from the teacher to the student, to a lineage of masters and students. They speak about many things. It's not just about the realization I am consciousness and that's it. That would be very minimalistic. But there are lots of things that the *Vedas* speak about. They speak about a cosmic *Prana*. They speak about an ocean of this physical universe, an ocean of matter, an ocean of *Prana*, an ocean of mind. There's a cosmic mind. What they're doing is, there are spiritual truths behind all of that. Behind life in nature, behind matter in nature, behind our speech, behind our sensory activities, behind the *Prana* coursing through these bodies.

So there are spiritual truths there, and as you put it beautifully, the non-dual seeing. Yes, I am non-dual *Brahman*, but when I bring that, those eyes, that vision back to this world, and when I see people and life, *Prana* and questions of health and sickness, I get a whole new vision and insight into it.

Let me give an example. Ayurveda, they're all allied systems. Ayurveda, which is literally the science of life or science of life spans, ancient Indian medical systems. They say what appears as physical problems has a deeper root in the *Prana* and the *Pranic* level. So instead of treating it If I'm treating the body, you treat the *Prana*. What appears as a problem in the *Prana* has emotional levels at the level of the mind. What appears as emotional problems at the level of the mind has intellectual roots, some disorder, some misunderstanding about oneself and life. So they talk about *Vijñāna Dosha*, a defect at the level of your understanding, your philosophy of life, which could manifest as a disease in the body. So you see this whole thing, which can manifest as something that a doctor can treat at the level of the body, but it has a *pranic* root. The issues at the *Pranic* level have mental and emo-

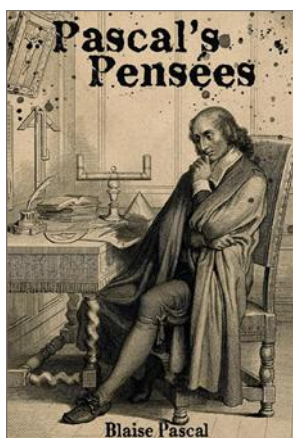
tional roots. The problem at the emotional level has an intellectual root. These are the *Koshas* or the sheath of our personality. There is the food sheath, *Annamaya Kosha*. You can fix it with diet. There is a *Pranic* sheath, which is more subtle and powerful, which is the vital forces which make this body alive. There is what is called *Manomaya Kosha*, a mental or emotional sheath. Then there is a *Vijnanamaya Kosha*, a sheath of intellect and understanding, as you said the heart, our most cherished understandings of ourselves.

A problem at that level can manifest as huge emotional upheavals in our life, and it can manifest as sickness in the body and in the *Prana*. These are the insights you gain when you achieve that ultimate spiritual realization. That's great. But when you bring it back to life, you gain insights that span a wide range of teachings.

LW: Wonderful. When the culture is sitting inside that dualistic frame, you can get a plethora of problems. So, yes, as we close here, is there anything you would like to leave any of the listeners or viewers with who might not have the faith to walk the path of *Advaita*?

Because it does take faith, especially, I mean, thankful to teachers like yourself who have really been spreading the teachings of *Advaita Vedanta* across the Western world or through Euro-American culture. You know, your work has become very extensive, which is beautiful. Of course, there's many others like you. But yet, it does take a leap for those of us who haven't been awakened, so to speak, or haven't been realized, who weren't brought up inside a culture that understands *Brahman* as pure consciousness and the non-dual reality. Is there any top tips for any listeners or viewers who might not have that faith?





SS: Yes, and it's not entirely necessary. One of the key teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, who was Swami Vivekananda's guru, is in Bengali, he used to say, *Jyotomot Tathopat*, as many faiths, so many paths. So, the core thing is to be connected to spirituality in whatever way possible. *Advaita* might not suit you, but maybe a devotional path will suit you, maybe a meditative path will suit you, maybe a more active way of selflessly doing good to others will suit you more, it will come more naturally to you. But in any way possible, be connected to the divine. Sri Ramakrishna used to further say, you set up a whole set of zeros, the total is still zero. But if you put one before the zeros, every zero has a value, you know, it's ten or a hundred or a thousand. That one is spirituality, in whichever form. If you are devout Christian, well and good, catch hold of the Christ, catch hold of God.

If you are spiritual but not religious, well and good. Have a meditative practice in your life, have a devotional practice in your life, and so on. So, that's one thing, that multiple paths can take you to the divine. Remember the one and the zeros, so have that one in our lives, let's have that one in our lives, in whichever way possible, catch hold of that one. A second thing I would like to suggest also comes from Vivekananda, is a good spiritual life, a balanced, wholesome and effective spiritual life generally should have these four components. A knowledge component, philosophical inquiry, *Vedantic* inquiry, a meditative component, at least twice in a day shut out the world and stay by yourself.

I think it was Pascal who said most of the problems of humanity come from man's inability to sit quietly in a room by himself, a meditative practice. Third: a devotional practice. If you believe in God, you are blessed, so have love and adoration for God, a relationship, set up a relationship with God. A practice of Karma, of active service, let my life be of benefit to others without asking for anything in return. Some part of my life, some part of my money, my energy, my sympathies, at least a few kind words to somebody, at least hold back those bitter words of judgment, somewhere of being of service to others. I put it this way, somebody said, can you put it without religious overtones? One way is put it this way, selfless, not selfish, that's *Karma Yoga*. Concentration, not distraction, that's *Raja Yoga*. Love, not desire, that's *Bhakti Yoga*. Knowledge of the self, not just knowledge of others, that's *Jñāna Yoga*.

LW: Wonderful, wonderful. Swamiji, thank you so much for sharing all of your knowledge and wisdom with us today. It's been a pleasure to be with you.

SS: Thank you, it was a pleasure, likewise.

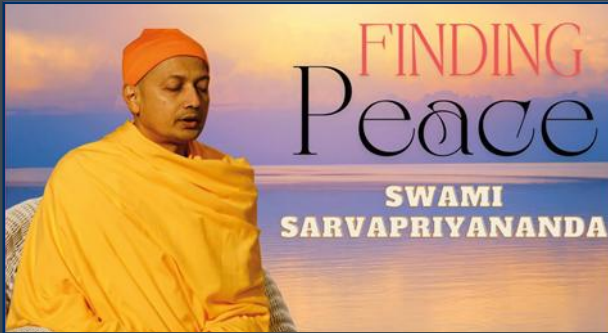
LW: Thank you to all of you watching and listening. Thank you for being with us. You are the reason that we're here, in community, exploring our common unity.

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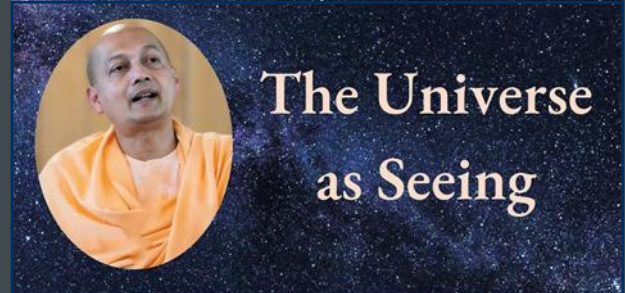
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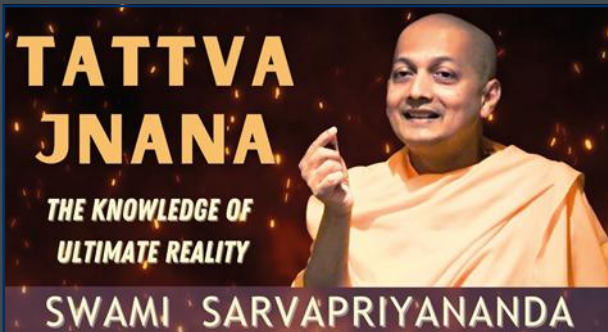


SWAMI SARVAPRIYANANDA

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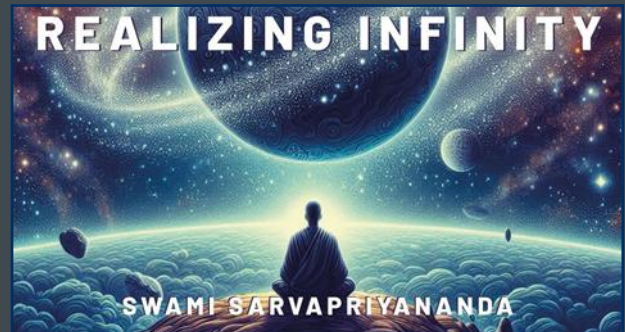
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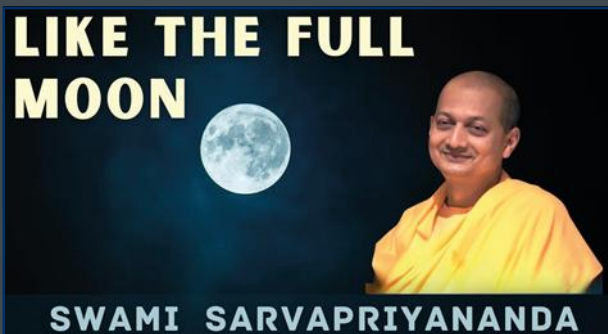
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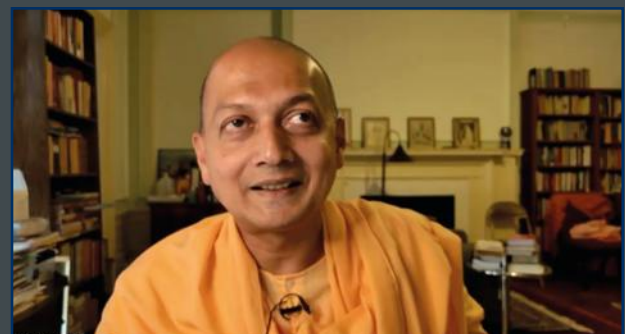
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Japa – Power of the Divine Name

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Calliope O'Callahan is a sixteen-year-old telepath who has to make a lot of money to pay her mother's medical bills by doing psychic readings. The Psy Syndicate is looking for talented psychics just like Calliope.

Amber Biggs is a typical twelve-year-old who has been abducted and is hoping someone will rescue her. Will Calliope and the Psy Syndicate rescue Amber in time?

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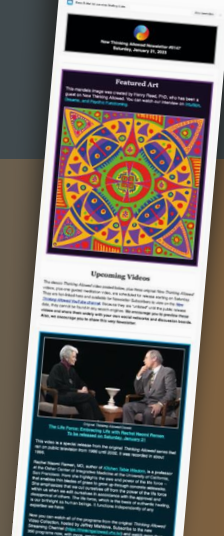


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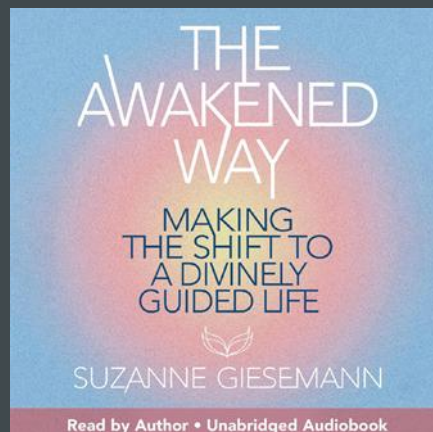
Suzanne Gieseemann is a spiritual teacher recognized on Watkins' list of the *100 Most Spiritually Influential Living People*. Others on the list include Pope Francis and the Dalai Lama. She was recently honored with the prestigious 2024 Humanity's Team Spiritual Leadership Award, which has only been given 11 times since 2006. Past recipients of this award include Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela (posthumously).

She is a former Navy Commander with a master's degree in National Security Affairs and served as a commanding officer and aide to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. She now guides people to enjoy a consciously connected and divinely guided life.

Suzanne has authored 15 books, six best-selling Hemi-Sync recordings, and YouTube videos that have reached millions of viewers. She produces the *Daily Way inspirational messages* and the *Awakened Way* app and hosts

the top-ranking *Messages of Hope* podcast. She leads classes, workshops, and retreats and serves as faculty with *The Shift Network* and Humanity's Team. She is a member of the Evolutionary Leaders Circle, a group of thought leaders from diverse disciplines who help support a global shift in consciousness.

Suzanne is known for her joyful, down-to-earth style of making deep spiritual concepts easy to understand. She laces her teaching with evidence-filled stories of the greater reality and practical tools that produce a personal experience of our multidimensional nature. Her messages bring hope and healing that go straight to the heart.





Original video interview on www.newthinkingallowed.com

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LIVING THE AWAKENED LIFE

JM: Hello and welcome. I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. Our topic today is, 'Living the Awakened Life.' My guest is Suzanne Giesemann, named by *Watkins Mind, Body, Spirit magazine* in 2022 as one of the 100 most spiritually influential people. She is a former U.S. Navy commander and served as a commanding officer and aide to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. She is also a spirit medium and is the author of 17 books on spiritual topics. Her newest book is *The Awakened Way: Making the Shift to a Divinely Guided Life*. Suzanne is in Idaho for the summer. Welcome, Suzanne. It's a real pleasure to be with you on New Thinking Allowed.

SG: Oh, Jeffrey, it's an honor to be with you. Thank you.

JM: I had the privilege of being interviewed by you just a few weeks ago. Now it is my pleasure to return the favor. You have an amazing life story. I think we need to start there because, on one hand you rose to the highest echelons inside the military and at the same time, you were experiencing a lot of tensions and torments. Frankly, that are natural to the life of a biological organism such as we humans.

SG: That's right. I love how you put that. Yes, it is not easy being human.

JM: I think it's interesting how people who are,

as you describe, sort of suffering on the inside but extremely successful on the outside.

SG: In the past, yes. There is no more suffering for me, thank goodness, and thanks to all that transpired, absolutely.

JM: If I understand it correctly, after you had served in the military as an aide to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, you discovered your spiritual work. I guess it is fair to call you a spirit medium but more than that, I see you as a spiritual teacher.

SG: I am glad you do, Jeffrey, because the mediumship was very unexpected. As for being a spiritual teacher, it's a small part of what I do now. It provides the evidence and the anecdotes that prove a greater reality. But that's not my true calling. It is definitely as a teacher. I tell people when I was aide to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, I had no idea of what I would be doing in the future. Well, certainly nobody would have known what was going to happen back then. It has been a total surprise.

JM: Well, I think that's very interesting. You and I share the fact that our lives have been touched by spiritual guidance. In my case, I don't really think of it so much as a surprise. It was just sort of a natural evolution. But for you it was literally a lightning strike that started things.



SG: That is true. I think you can see in the background, here up on the little shelf behind me, a very small picture of my stepdaughter, Susan. She followed in her father's footsteps by joining the military. My husband is a retired Navy captain. She joined the Marines. A really tough assignment for a young woman as an enlisted woman. She was doing very well but was struck by lightning in 2006. She was six months pregnant at the time. So, both she and the baby died on that day. That incident absolutely took me down a different path.

JM: I can imagine. This is your stepdaughter and you must have had a very strong attachment to her. Why would somebody be cut down like that right in the prime of their life and pregnant to boot?

SG: Exactly. I had no answers. The 'why' question haunted me and I had no spirituality to fall back on. I had no belief system about an afterlife. When we went to the funeral and I saw her body in the coffin, Jeffrey, I just *knew* there was more. I knew you could not kill the spirit. So, you had knowledge and it was your natural evolution. For me it was an epiphany. I was always very mission-oriented, and this became my new mission: to connect with her.

JM: Which subsequently occurred.

SG: It did. Many years of meditating daily and unwavering devotion to asking, "Susan, let me see you. Susan, show yourself to me." Not, "Are you there?" I knew she was there, but, "What is it going to take to connect with you?" The beautiful part is, clearly Spirit had better ideas for me than just connecting with Susan. In those years of trying to connect with her, I opened up to the greater reality. You're very familiar with it.



JM: Let's talk about that. You began, before Susan manifested in your awareness, there were others, I presume?

SG: Oh, yes. I came to know we all have guides. As a former Navy officer commander, I didn't want to be talking about spirit guides. That's, "...out there" stuff. I did not believe in angels. They convinced me with the evidence. The experiences I had were that we are all surrounded by help, when we ask for it.

I began to connect with other people's loved ones, before I connected with Susan. All part of a plan. She even came through a year or so ago to say, "You were not supposed to connect with me right away. You would have stopped. You would have stopped with me." Instead, I opened up to connecting with anyone.

JM: You've elucidated an important principle here. Things are planned for us, that our lives are... they may seem accidental to us, but from another perspective, I guess it would be fair to say: nothing is accidental.

SG: I am not convinced there are unexpected things, but certainly synchronicities. The web of connections shows itself in wondrous ways, as you know.





JM: Well, I am glad you hedged your answer because to say nothing is accidental is a pretty strong statement.

SG: It is. I know that due to free will, that is the wild card. You may be right on track, but then somebody else exercises their free will. This may upset things a bit.

JM: The fact that your daughter-in-law was struck by lightning became not only an opening for you, but also a theme in your life. The idea of a person being struck by lightning has become very important to you.

SG: It did, because...

JM: And I might mention it's important to me, too.

SG: Oh, I want to hear why. In giving a presentation about the afterlife and sharing how Susan passed—at the Edgar Cayce Institute, I believe—a couple in the front row looked stunned when they heard that Susan was struck by lightning. Their son was also killed by lightning. For both of us, it was the first time we had met anybody else who had endured that same kind of tragedy. I will just put a caveat on this and say, it's always a tragedy when someone passes. I know now that it wasn't a tragedy for Susan. Nor will it be for us,

at the soul level when we die. We don't actually die. I came to know this couple's son, across the veil, his nickname is Wolf. I wrote a book about his story because he actually left proof in the form of a drawing in a poem. He knew he was going to die the next day, by a lightning strike. It goes on from there, but yes, the whole theme of lightning is pretty strong in my life.

JM: It's a very important symbol for me. Back in 1968, I was a real estate broker. I owned a real estate company that I named Lightning Real Estate.

SG: Oh, no kidding. I didn't know that.

JM: Yeah, so it's been a theme in my life for a long time. It borders on the paranormal. I wrote a book called, *The PK Man*, about a fellow named Ted Owens. He had amazing psychokinetic powers, including control over lightning. Ted could just point his finger and concentrate and lightning would strike. So I wrote a book about him and lightning was an important symbol for him, as well.

SG: Wow. Years later, Jeffrey, we learned Susan's, well, we remembered and didn't realize at the time, her dog that she got months before passing by lightning strike, she had named *Thor*. The Norse god with a lightning bolt symbol. Her other dog was named *Athena*, who was the Greek goddess of thunder and lightning. The signs, the synchronicity, the web, just go on and on.

JM: To me it says the universe is alive. Lightning is one of the manifestations of the universal life force.

SG: Without a doubt. Lightning was used as a tool to get Susan to cross, when she was supposed to,



as part of this plan that you're talking about. She was in a rollover car accident about a year before she passed and wasn't even scratched. I believe the universe was saying, "Hey, there are bigger plans as a result of you not being in a physical form. The accident didn't do it. And so we will send a lightning bolt when it is not even raining."

JM: The young man Wolf, who was also struck by lightning and seemed to have a premonition that it would happen, left a drawing and poem, all pretty explicit. He talked about the ... if I recall his wording, "...the light from nature would come and release his soul."

SG: That's right, that's right. Before the lightning strike, he was sitting having coffee with friends and suddenly said, "I have to go now." He just stood up and walked straight to the cemetery where he always meditated. An unusual place for meditation. This is where the lightning strike occurred.

He left his apartment clean and neat. Almost as if it had never been, as his parents describe. Usually the rooms looked like a storm had gone through, but he straightened everything up that day. Everything was in order. He knew he was leaving.

JM: That's really quite amazing.

SG: What's really amazing is that his final picture, with the poem, was a drawing of what would happen afterwards, after he was struck. It's a phenomenal story that I love to share because people always try to find ways to explain it. There is only one way to explain it. We are not just human. In fact, it is Wolf who led me to the teachings that I use today. It's all wrapped up, in what I call, the

Awakened Way. That came from Wolf's messages. He came through a reading I ultimately did for his parents. When I got to know him, I said, he is one of the most powerful souls I have ever encountered, as a normal family member. It is because he had a message to share with all of us.

JM: The fundamental message, as I understand it, is that we have a dual nature. Yes, we are biological creatures, but we also have a soul. The soul is, and correct me if I don't say it the way you would like, but the soul is outside of space and time itself. It is eternal.

SG: That is absolutely the way I would say it, Jeffery. I would also not say we *have* a soul. I would say, we *are* a soul in a body.

JM: Hahahaha! I like that, yeah. All of this was communicated in a series of messages from the young man Wolf?

SG: That's right. The connection I had with him lasted a few months. I don't hear from him much anymore, but it was so clear at one time. He just guided me step by step. And I discovered why he brought certain things up in the reading I did for his parents. It didn't make sense at the time. So it's like pulling apart a mystery. One leading to the realization that this is what I want you all to know. As a species, humanity is out of balance. You are just way too much in the head or in the left brain. You need to balance that with your soul's attributes: be in the heart, flowing, being in the right brain type of mentality. It is more of an energy, isn't it? So finding balance has made all the difference for me. Then, for all those with whom I share this information. It's the key to the end of suffering.



JM: A lot of people have recognized the dual nature of the human being. Some suggest we are born into conflict because our spiritual nature and animal nature are at odds. Animal nature, first and foremost, wants to survive. It will do all kinds of things, including hurting others, in order to do so. Whereas to the spiritual side, survival is not particularly a concern.

SG: This is what I have learned by communicating with those who have passed. Thousands of souls I have communicated with are no longer worried about pain. They know that it is temporary. They understand the suffering leads to growth. The animal nature you talked about is built into the human body. We cannot help but react when we are in human form and perceive a threat. I learned from Wolf, and other spirits, is that the other 'soul nature' is here, too. We miss it when we focus so much on the objective, external world.

JM: The goal of *The Awakened Way*, as you teach others, is to live more in harmony with their spiritual nature or soul.

SG: Absolutely. The first step in coming to the experience is through meditation. We learn practices of presence, through hearing stories about who we really are.

You begin to educate yourself about your true nature, then you experience it. Once you experience the peace, the joy, the connection that is right here, right now, you go beyond animal human nature. You realize, "Oh, I can make a shift at any time. I can engage higher beings. I can embody my higher self beyond the human body. This changes everything."

JM: Let's talk about your guides for a moment. I was a little confused because you refer to a collective intelligence named Sanaya. If I understand this correctly, the name represents the collective mind of many guides.

SG: So they tell me. It is definitely when this collective steps in and is much more powerful than any one being. I connect with several when I do sessions for people. Even when I connect with my own personal guide.

But Sanaya stepped up in 2010. It was a long time ago. Sanaya was so powerful and had both a feminine and a masculine feel. I asked, "Who are you?" This is a thing that happens a lot, Jeffrey. People come to me and say, "I experienced a presence." They ask, "Who was it?" I say, "Well, did you ask them?" "No." "Just engage them." So, I asked who they were. They replied, "We are a collective consciousness of guides." In fact, they do change from time to time. I sit with them every day and get a message from them daily. They have given me thousands of messages over the years. Sometimes it feels like a group. Sometimes it is one person. I have had several identify themselves as part of the Sanaya group. As for the rest, I have stopped worrying about and accept what they have to share, as long as it is a helpful and healing message.

JM: You have also referred to your personal guide named Boris, if I recall correctly.

SG: Yeah, he is my personal guide. Boris came to me after once working with me. In the middle of the night, he showed me a lifetime we experienced in physical form together, during the 1800s. He went on to give me specific historical details



about the time period that I could not know. Boris explained things accurately that I looked up online. It was absolutely fascinating. Those of the spirit world know that I need verifiable information. If none, I would think, this is crazy. Forget it.

JM: It is an important factor. I have to concur. As a parapsychologist, we are very interested in evidence.

SG: I am glad you are because many people are happy with only what they sense. Personally, that's great. But if we are going to be sharing this with others, as a collective experience, we need evidence.

JM: I was thinking, for example, of the story about Wolf. You show in your book the drawing that he made and the poem that he wrote the day before he was struck by lightning. This sequence of events needs to be published somewhere, in a refereed scientific journal. The academic community can then take that evidence into account.

SG: Absolutely. There is another picture in there that shows his favorite t-shirt. His parents saw him all the time in this t-shirt. Yet the day before he was struck and killed by lightning, he defaced the shirt by cutting out the picture on the front of the shirt. He tacked it to the wall, facing the poem that said he was going to allow the light of nature to free his soul. What was depicted on the t-shirt, Jeffrey, do you remember?

JM: A bolt of lightning.

SG: That's it. I mean, come on.

JM: How much more explicit does he need to get?



SG: Exactly.

JM: But you encourage people who are opening up, who are engaged in a spiritual awakening, to seek evidence.

SG: Yes, I do. I know this really helps people because they do not realize we can ask. I make it fun sometimes. I call it the "sign game." I know that those across the veil don't mind when we ask for evidence-based signs. They want us to know they are here. They want us to believe. They will pull out all the stops and knock your socks off, if you are willing to play.

JM: Well, speaking of playing, you write a fascinating story in your book about Boris. He gave you a very explicit direction to visit a retreat camp. It turned out to be a negative experience, that later became positive.

SG: Oh, absolutely. It convinced me beyond a doubt that spirit guides are real. We had been traveling probably 2,000 miles for months in our RV, on our annual trek across the country in the summer. I always take books with me. We don't watch TV. I love to read. I had finished a book. "Oh, boy, time to read a new book." So I reached up into the cabinet where I had all these books waiting to be read. They'd been there for months.



I looked at the covers, “Oh, I’ll read this one next.” Had not opened the covers at all. Then I felt Boris. I heard him say, “No, not that one, that other.” My human side said, “No, I want to read this one.” A little bit of pushback there. He said, “No, that one.” So, I have learned not to push back more than once. I pulled the book he indicated off the shelf.

He made me turn to the back of the book. There was a picture of a place we had just visited the day. We were in the same area. I looked down at the bottom of the page and there was an address of a retreat center. We were going to be passing nearby, exactly passing by the place the very next morning. I knew this was a spirit thing. I said to my husband, “We have to go visit this place.” Like you said, it turned out to be a very negative experience because it had a very cult-like feel. It was frightening to both of us. My husband and I looked at each other. I say it was like a Hotel California moment. You know, you can come in, but you cannot leave. Luckily, we were able to leave. We got in our RV. I looked at my husband and said, “I need to talk to Boris.” He said, “Yes, please.” What was that all about? Why did he clearly send me to this place?

So I went into meditation. I asked, “Why did you send me there?” The answer changed my life. He gave two reasons. “Number one, to let you know that we in the spirit world absolutely know exactly where you are at all times.” Literally, that

was true from the way he guided me in the moment to read that book. But number two, he said, “Some of those other books in the cabinet are going to send you down some rabbit holes. You really don’t need to go down them. Your path, Suzanne, is to teach only love.” It is not that the books were wrong or that the information was bad, but they would have taken me into far more esoteric, and bluntly, real woo woo stuff. Really out there things that may have alienated me from a more mainstream audience. I know they are my mission, with my background.

People trust me. I am very proud and grateful for their trust. I want people to know that we all have guides. We all have access to insights, wisdom and guidance. I want others to look for their guides because as we do, they can find the love that is my path to teach.

JM: That is so profound. I think we are getting right to the heart of things. I know myself, I love the woo woo. I am deeply interested in the after-life and its many dimensions. I’m fascinated by UFOs/UAPs and anything associated with the paranormal. I think it’s all important, from a scientific point of view. But when you are working with people who are trying to deal with the struggles of being human, as we have alluded to already, nothing is more important than teaching love.

SG: Yes sir, absolutely. That is the bottom line. In fact, my guides know that I love acronyms because of my military background. My acronyms are always big to military folks. The guides have given me an acronym. It is LIFE. We are here for LIFE: *Love In Full Expression*. This is who and what we are. We are life unfolding. If we are not expressing our true loving nature, we miss out.



JM: I am totally concurrent. I think when you interviewed me last, I mentioned my beliefs, something I try to live up to but I cannot claim that I always do. It is important to me. My motto is to love all people, all the time. Not just all people, everything. Everything all the time. I think this is what you are aiming for in your work.

SG: It is, Jeffrey. Many people who, if they were where I was before I started down this path, would have heard what you say and responded, I cannot love everyone. This thought is indicative of simply the left hemisphere of the brain, the survival mode and the get it done managerial side. But the right side of the brain knows our connection. The right knows we are all united, allows us to love each other because we are experiencing a connection. So it is just a matter of, again, getting back to making the shift to realize we are both. There is nothing wrong with getting it done. Or even being in the left brain mindset. But when you don't balance love and connection, this is when we feel empty, hopeless. This is when we suffer. I know what it feels like to feel empty. I know what it feels like to try to fill the hole and nothing will. Accessing the soul can fill the emptiness. Wow.

JM: Beautifully put and correct me if I'm wrong, but I think what you are saying is we can't command ourselves or tell ourselves we must love everything. You suggest we do not have to because it is already there. This is our soul. It's our natural state of being, at the soul level, to feel love for all of creation.

SG: That's absolutely what I'm saying. Until we learn to subdue the left side of our being, the left hemisphere actions, and activate the soul activity

of the right hemisphere of the brain, we cannot imagine how to love everybody. But just a few minutes a day of meditation or practice of presence, or the desire to live more from the soul's perspective, activates these circuits. The left brain keeps us from our true nature beyond the brain. The circuits come alive when the body dies. So why wait till we die to discover the love that is already here?

JM: One of the things you are saying is that we have the ability to, what would be the best word, to access wisdom, too. And the soul has a certain kind of natural wisdom. I'd even go further. It's not just wisdom, it is extrasensory abilities. One can see into distant parts of time and space from the soul. So all knowledge is essentially available to us, if we ask for it.

SG: Absolutely. It is because we become connected to all that is, right now. So when we ask for it, this ignites intuition. The definition of intuition is direct knowledge. When you can bring that into any project, work projects, left brain projects, you have balance and greater flow. My book, *The Awakened Way*, was a product of tapping into higher consciousness. I read some of those passages and I think, "Wow, I don't even remember writing that." It is not exactly channeled, but you get in a higher state. I have several recordings that I narrated for the Binaural Beats recordings with the HemiSync Company. Six of them, in fact. Every one of the scripts I channeled, from my guides. I realized I could sit down and write out what I want people to know. But why not just go higher? Why not access something beyond the norm?

So I simply went into meditation, "I know you can do this better than me. What should we say?" I turned on the tape recorder and got my script. I



was told that the HemiSync Company would edit the scripts and change them until just right. Yet all six of my scripts have never had a word changed. It is because the scripts are from on high.

JM: If I recall correctly, you describe this as inspired writing. You distinguish it from other forms of channeling where the channeler is not even conscious of what's coming through.

SG: That's right. We are all capable of this. Just a little bit of practice, learning a few techniques. Anybody can do inspired writing. Connecting with your loved ones who have passed. Can you imagine? It's absolutely possible for all of us. This is the most beautiful message. We don't have to be born with awareness of this ability to connect with loved ones across the veil. If it's your calling to be a medium, it will become clear. But to connect with mom or dad or a child or a partner who has passed, we can all learn to do that.

JM: At the same time, you point out in your own history that it took you a very long time before you first were able to communicate with your stepdaughter, killed by lightning. The reason being it wasn't meant to happen until other things had happened first. So I guess it is important to realize that you need to be patient. It's not as if you can just snap your fingers and automatically do all of these things.

SG: That's exactly right. People look at me and say, "Oh, that just opened up for her." But no, it took dedication and commitment. Or they think "I don't have her military discipline." But it is not that. I'm sure it plays a role, though. Rather it's this inner knowing. There is something more and you are

honoring the knowing. You commit yourself to just a few minutes a day. Shut out the external world and learn from what arises within.

JM: Normally, from our biological point of view, we live in a world of dualisms. Good and bad, right and wrong. Not a world in which everything is interconnected. In the dualistic world, I think we are encouraged, frankly, to hate. We are encouraged to hate all kinds of things. Crime, for example. Criminals should be hated. All sorts of marginalized groups are sometimes, culturally, the victims of large-scale hatred. I would think as you open up more to your soul nature, you realize the paradox. Because on one hand, we are biological and we have anger. I hate to say it, but sometimes I feel hatred. Part of the process of finding balance is learning how to let go of that.

SG: The first step, Jeffrey, is recognizing it. We are so used to responding in a human way. Happily, the more you come to know your soul nature, the less positive aspects of the human side become so apparent that when they flare up, you think "This is not the real me." You acknowledge it. You set it aside and shift. It's also a matter of changing your word choice. For example, I no longer say, "I don't like them. I don't like that person," or I do not use the hate word. I say instead, "I do not resonate with them." This is really what is going on. It's an energetic dissonance with some people's energy field, or behavior. Even the way they express themselves. But I see their soul, so I don't dislike them. I sure do not resonate with certain actions. These practices change the way we interrelate with people.

JM: There are people who, from a conventional point of view, have done horrible, horrible things.



Hitler is always used as the archetypal example of this type. But he embodied a soul. I don't know if we've gotten this far yet, but I have heard it said, I kind of concur, that there is no plural of soul. There is one soul.

SG: You are not the first person to say it. I would agree with you. One soul that compartmentalizes itself into smaller souls. You really can't put a box around that, yet it takes on certain patterns. We identify as individuals. But it is one soul. I agree with you completely.

JM: So that would imply that even the worst villains in human history, we are one with.

SG: We all have the potential within us. We are all limitless beings that could express themselves in any way. A person like Hitler was completely blinded to the true nature of love and the interconnectedness. That's what I see when I see people that hurt other people. They absolutely do not realize their soul nature or they could not hurt anybody else.

JM: I'm reminded of Jesus on the cross saying, "Forgive them, Lord, for they do not know what they do."

SG: Indeed, yeah.

JM: This way of being that you refer to as the Awakened Way is really very different than conventional human behavior. The sort of thing that almost every family teaches their children.

SG: Unfortunately, you're right. Yet it's so easy to live this way. It does demand awareness and



commitment. It is very easy to slip back into only human behavior, as I call it, because we are not just human but an eternal soul. We say "Oh, I am only human." That is wrong. We're not. So coming to learn this and living this way does take a commitment. That is the challenge. Most people are not aware of it. I look around and see people talking to their kids in the store and I think, "That is not really the way we want to teach them."

JM: I also hear you saying that if people decide they want to live more as an expression of soul, rather than as an expression of their biological components, it is doable. It can be achieved.

SG: It's so doable. We look at social media and Facebook as this place where a lot of people get after each other. Yet I have a Facebook page that is nothing but love. We have 99.9% positive comments. I have this site called *The Awakened Way community*. I have monthly webinars. I lead retreats and cruises. The thing that is most astounding with my in-person classes, students remark, "I've never felt energy like this." It is because when you gather awakened people, it becomes a love fest. So we just need to get that vibe going with more people. It is definitely infectious. We need it to go viral.

JM: I think I was gifted by being born with the family name of Mishlove. It sort of set a pattern for





me, you know. Thinking often, what does the name mean? I began thinking, well, Mishlove means you must love everybody and everything.

SG: Wow. Yeah, you're right. My father got a family name for his middle name and it's Love. He was Oliver Love, love was his middle name. He was embarrassed by that. He would never tell people what it was and he had zero belief in the afterlife. He thought when you're dead, you are dead. The curtain comes down.

I have since heard from him after his passing. I got beautiful evidence from him. I can't even say it's a shame he didn't learn that while here in the body. I see it as everybody unfolds at their own rate. Next time around he may figure it out before he passes.

JM: Well, here's an interesting question. You often say, next time around. We haven't delved into reincarnation. You hinted that you had a past life with your guide, Boris. I've heard it said, before we achieve final enlightenment, we may need to live 35,000 human lifetimes.

SG: I am not a reincarnation expert, by any means. The experience with Boris told me about my past life. This convinced me that it is real. My guides telling me about reincarnation has really convinced me, too. Yes, we do go round and round.

I believe Wolf was a much more advanced soul. Some souls don't need to come back. Often they do so for what they have to share with us in the here and now. I will tell you that many say, "I'm never coming back. I would have never chosen this life." But the more you awaken, you realize, "Well, yeah, we did choose it. What are we going to do with that?" The farther down you go; the higher up you go. You discover that underneath it is an underlying level of joy that never changes.

But it's not happiness. It is a state of being that is absolutely blissful. We can experience that now. This is a heaven.

JM: Your comment is beautifully stated. I think it is so crucial, too. I'm pretty sure what you're referring to is what in Sanskrit is known as *ananda* or bliss.

SG: Yes, yes.

JM: It is the ultimate nature of things, if we let ourselves feel it. Yet I, too, hear from people quite a bit. From many viewers on this program who state, "I never want to come back." I've had guests who proclaim that we live on a prison planet. This is a horrible planet to be born onto. Yet my own experience is the opposite. This is a wonderful planet even with all of its problems.

SG: Absolutely. We're given each other to help each other through the down points. I remember when we had to say goodbye to my little dog. I knew we had to help her cross the veil. I knew it was going to be hard. I knew what I knew about the afterlife. I just want to tell everybody that even when you know who you are, that does not mean we don't temporarily feel pain. So I surrounded



myself with people who know what we know about the Awakened Way. When Gretchen crossed the veil, there were several moments when I definitely wanted off the planet. I didn't sign up for this. You know, we get back in that human mode. It lasts a little bit because we know how to shift.

JM: I suppose one of the things that always tests our spiritual awareness, our level of spiritual awakening, are the pains of life. It is easy to feel, when one is in pain and in despair, that spiritual teachings we have been living based on might feel worthless, at those moments.

SG: But happily, there are many tools we can use to learn to deal with painful moments. So we've been talking about theory here, but with my practical background, I have a whole toolkit that we can dive into and pull ourselves out of the pit. Thank goodness.

JM: Well, you talked about the importance of balance. I imagine there are various tools in the toolkit. We plan to have a completely separate interview so that we may focus on those tools. I want all the *New Thinking Allowed* viewers to have a taste of these tools. So I am looking forward to our next interview. What you're saying is the resources we need to live the awakened life are available to us, here and now.

SG: They absolutely are. But it's just amazing how it is possible to go through our whole lives and not realize that. Based on—you read the book, you know what I'm talking about when I say based on our BS.

JM: & **SG:** Laugh

SG: That's an acronym, isn't it? It's another acronym, but it stands for 'Belief System.' Many people are very entrenched in their human belief system and the many other beliefs that keep them a prisoner. This is when life turns into a jail on this planet. If that is your BS and you are suffering, could there be another way? There is a better way. It's the *Awakened Way*.

JM: Well, I think we can close on that note for people to remember ... if they feel stuck, it might be their BS.

SG: That's it!

JM: Suzanne Giesemann, what a joy to be with you. I am so thrilled to be able to have this conversation and to share your beautiful presence with the *New Thinking Allowed* audience. Thank you so much for being with me and with us.

SG: You're welcome. It's a total pleasure.

JM: And for those of you watching or listening, thank you for being with us because you are the reason that we are here.

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Exercises for Awakening

Suzanne Giesemann

Exercises for Awakening
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A TOOL TO SEE THE ONENESS

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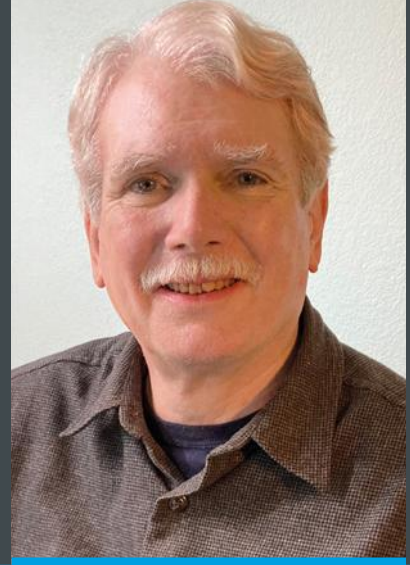
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Matthew McKay

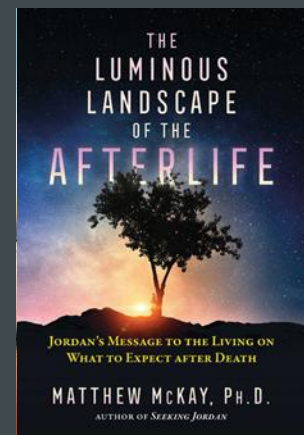
Matthew McKay, PhD, is a clinical psychologist, professor of psychology at the Wright Institute, co-founder of Haight Ashbury Psychological Services, founder of the Berkeley CBT Clinic, and cofounder of the Bay Area Trauma Recovery Clinic, which serves low-income clients. He has authored and coauthored more than 40 books, including *Seeking Jordan: How I Learned the Truth about Death and the Invisible Universe*, *The Luminous Landscape of the Afterlife: Jordan's Message to the Living on What to Expect After Death*, *Love in the Time of Impermanence*, and *Lessons from the Afterlife: A Deep Knowledge Meditation Guidebook*.

With his books having sold over 4.5 million copies, Dr. McKay's contributions extend across the realms of psychology and spirituality. He has codeveloped five treatment protocols, addressing various psychological challenges and fostering spiritual growth and development.

Fifteen years ago, McKay's world was shattered by the loss of his son, Jordan. This devastating event spurred him on a profound journey to reconnect with Jordan, initially seeking reassurance of his existence and later delving into the mysteries of the afterlife. Through this transformative quest, McKay discovered the practice of channeled writing, which became the cornerstone of his seminal books on Jordan's teachings.

He has become a beacon of hope for those grappling with grief, fear of death, and profound loss. Through his private practice and widespread teachings, he employs a multifaceted approach encompassing channeled writing, past and life-between-lives inductions, Induced After-Death Communication, and Acceptance and Mindfulness therapies. This holistic methodology provides profound solace and healing for individuals navigating the depths of grief and existential uncertainty.

In 1973, he cofounded New Harbinger press, dedicated to publishing practical, evidence-based tools for mental health professionals, as well as self-help books for general readers seeking to improve their lives and reach their fullest potential. It has become a publisher of choice for both general readers and mental health professionals looking for effective and reliable information.





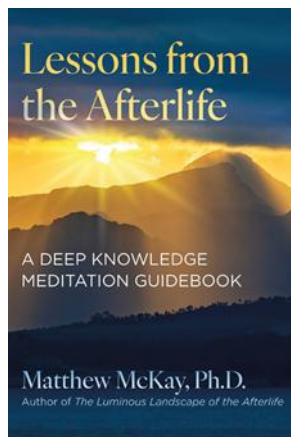
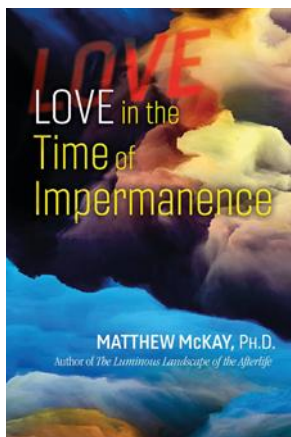
Original video interview on www.newthinkingallowed.com

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AFTER-DEATH COMMUNICATION

EV: Hello and welcome. I'm Emmy Vadnais, Co-Host with Jeffrey Mishlove. Today we'll be exploring after-death communication with my guest, Matthew McKay, who has been a clinical psychologist for 40 years and professor of psychology at the Wright Institute. He has authored and coauthored over 40 books, including *Seeking Jordan: How I Learned the Truth About Death and the Invisible Universe*, *The Luminous Landscape of the Afterlife: Jordan's Message to the Living on What to Expect After Death*, *Love in the Time of Impermanence*, and *Lessons from the Afterlife: A Deep Knowledge Meditation Guidebook*. This is a second interview with Matthew on New Thinking Allowed, and he is joining us from Berkeley, California. Welcome, Matt. It is a joy to have you back with me on *New Thinking Allowed* today.

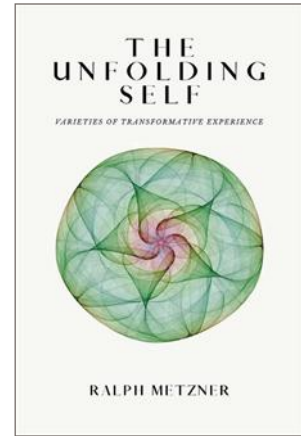
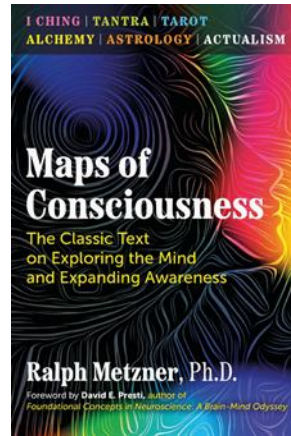
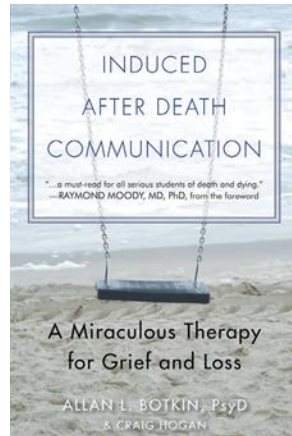
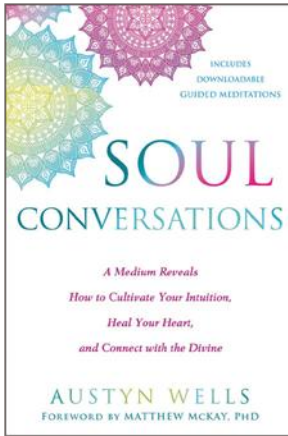
MM: I am glad to be with you, Emmy.



EV: In our first conversation, we discussed the themes of love and impermanence. You can find that interview linked in the upper right corner of the screen. During that discussion, you shared how you maintain the bond of love with your son, Jordan, and how we can all do the same. You emphasized that death does not sever our connection with our loved ones in the afterlife. Today, we will delve deeper into your communication with Jordan. Could you share a bit about him and explain how you began to communicate with him after his passing?

MM: Yes, Jordan has been gone from the physical world we call Earth for over 15 years. Almost from the moment I learned of his passing, I became obsessed with trying to find him and see if I could connect with him. I think anyone who has lost someone they love dearly experiences similar feelings: Does that soul still exist? Is that person, that soul, okay? Are they at peace where they are? These were burning questions for me. I began my search for answers by working with mediums, including Felix Lerma in San Francisco and Austyn Wells. I then visited Allan Botkin, the pioneer of Induced After-Death Communication (IADC), which uses Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) as a foundation for facilitating communication with those on the other side. During my session with Botkin, I had the profound experience of actually hearing Jordan. He was there, and he





conveyed the messages I needed to hear: that he is with us, that he loves us, and that he is doing well where he is.

Some of the grief lifted. I began to feel some hope that I could reach him and had reached him on some level. Except it wasn't a conversation. It wasn't an opportunity to really talk back and forth and explore something together. It was a one way communication. I consulted Ralph Metzner, a specialist in the afterlife and communication with souls. He taught me how to channel. Now, I don't possess any special abilities; I'm not clairaudient, nor do I have mediumship skills. However, I learned that anyone can channel. In about an hour, he taught me the technique, and when I went home, I had my first experience of actually conversing with Jordan. I could hear from him, ask questions, and absorb as much information as I could hold. That was just the beginning. Over the past 15 years, we have had hundreds of conversations, and Jordan has even initiated the writing of several books.

Jordan has important messages he wants to share with incarnate souls here on Earth. He has found a way to express these messages through me. In addition to these book projects, he continues to support, help, and advise me in various aspects of my life.

EV: What are some of the messages that Jordan shares with you?

MM: One of the most important aspects for me, and I believe for those who are following Jordan and learning from him, is understanding the purpose of life. Why do we come to this difficult place? There is so much struggle and pain here. Why do souls choose to incarnate in such challenging circumstances? What is the point? Sometimes, it feels like the overwhelming pain we experience is a sign of failure. When we struggle, hurt, or face losses, we may begin to believe that it's somehow our fault or a reflection of our shortcomings.

Jordan emphasizes that it's actually the opposite of what we might think. We come here to learn, to grow, and to evolve as souls. Since souls are part of God and the divine, we are all interconnected. In our journey of learning, we also contribute to the evolution of God, the divine, and the collective consciousness.

God is not a perfect puppet master, merely observing our struggles for divine amusement. Instead, God is evolving and growing. As individual pieces of consciousness, we are parts of God, and in our journey, we help the divine grow and evolve alongside us. We have a sacred mission here on Earth. It's not just about showing up and living a life; it's about learning how to love in the face of all the pain and struggle present in the world. By learning to love, we not only evolve and grow ourselves, but we also facilitate the evolution and growth of the divine.



EV: In your latest book, you share channeled messages from Jordan, accompanied by journal prompts that encourage readers to explore their inner selves. This provides an opportunity for introspection on profound topics such as the mysteries of human existence, the nature of the divine or God, the essence of the soul, and the reasons behind our experiences of beauty and pain. You also delve into concepts like the nature of matter, energy, the origin of the universe, time, impermanence, and the distinction between reality and illusion versus meaning. Before we dive deeper into these topics and what Jordan has shared with you, how do you respond to those who question the veracity of these messages? Have you ever questioned them yourself, wondering if you were simply creating these insights from your own sense of loss or grief?

MM: Yes, that's a great question. First, I want to acknowledge that anyone who channels or tries to connect with those on the other side will likely experience some doubt. It's an inherent part of the process. Thoughts often arise, questioning whether the insights are truly from my experience or genuinely coming from my loved one. Jordan has made it clear that I may never completely eliminate this doubt from my experience. However, what helps me maintain a strong sense of hope and expectation is knowing that Jordan communicates in his own way. His style of communication feels very different from mine; the choice of language and the way he constructs sentences are unique to him. This distinction reassures me that our connection is authentic.

One of the most profound aspects of this experience for me is that Jordan has shared so many insights that I was completely unaware of—insights that have truly blown me away. I often find myself

wondering, "Where did that come from?" It comes from a soul with an incredible amount of wisdom and knowledge on the other side—knowledge that I simply don't possess. Time and time again, he surprises me and expands my understanding in ways that feel mind-blowing. Each time this occurs, I am filled with a sense of awe. I am not only in the presence of my son, whom I loved deeply, but also in the presence of a soul with a vast array of experiences and knowledge. He has lived hundreds of lives and has access to the insights and awareness from those experiences, as well as the vastness of the spirit world and everything we can encounter there.

It's truly an interesting, wonderful, and humbling experience to hear things repeatedly that surprise and amaze me. This ongoing revelation has significantly contributed to my sense of confidence. Each time I discover insights that were previously unknown to me, it reinforces my belief in the authenticity of this connection and the depth of knowledge that exists beyond our physical realm.

EV: What has surprised you that Jordan has shared with you?

MM: One of the key insights Jordan has shared in various ways is that, in some respects, religion can fail us. While we often seek to come together in religious groups as a form of community or tribe, this structure inherently creates divisions. There are those who belong to the tribe and those who do not, leading to an element of judgment. In many religious contexts, there are individuals deemed "good" or "saved," who are perceived as being on the path of righteousness, while others are cast out and made to feel, on some level, subhuman. This isn't true for every religion, but many tend to be



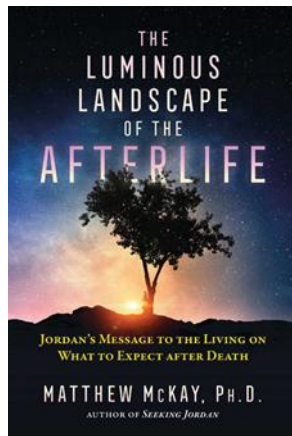
exclusionary. It often becomes a matter of whether you are in or out, believing in a specific dogmatic set of beliefs or being labeled as an apostate, someone who does not belong.

Jordan emphasizes that this binary perspective is not what spirituality truly represents.

Spirituality is about understanding our interconnectedness and feeling love and connection towards all beings, rather than excluding or judging others. It's about including and loving everyone, regardless of their current state—whether they are living or deceased, or what beliefs they may hold. The message is one of inclusion rather than tribalism. One of the more dramatic insights Jordan has shared is that spirituality is not about judgment; it transcends notions of good and bad, right and wrong. Instead, spirituality is about discovering how to love in the face of the struggles and pain we encounter on this planet. This core principle of learning how to love amidst pain has been a recurring theme in Jordan's messages, emphasizing the importance of moving beyond tribal affiliations toward a more universal understanding of what is.

EV: How has your ability to communicate with Jordan impacted your life personally?

MM: In many ways, my perspective has shifted significantly. One major change is that I am now much less afraid of death. As a young person, I was terrified by the prospect of death; it felt like a constant specter looming over me. Over the years, I've written and published a lot of poetry, much of which grapples with death—anticipating it, won-



dering about it, and trying to make sense of it. This has been a significant part of my history. However, my understanding has transformed because Jordan has clearly communicated to me what lies on the other side. He even encouraged us to write a book titled *The Luminous Landscape of the Afterlife*, which describes what truly happens beyond this life and how to prepare for the transition from the physical plane to the spiritual realm. This revelation has profoundly changed my outlook. Additionally, I now feel less alone. I sense Jordan's presence with me all the time—guiding and supporting me, constantly reminding me of his existence in various ways. Feeling his support from the other side has made a huge difference in my life. He guides me in my decisions, often advising me on what to do or avoid. It's not uncommon for him to show up and say, "Don't say that" or "Don't do that." His guidance is immediate and impactful.

Jordan often helps me with my clients. There are times when I find myself stumped and unsure of how to proceed. In those moments, he jumps in and suggests, "Try this." His presence is felt with me consistently, providing support in numerous ways. This connection has made an enormous difference in my life. I no longer feel isolated within my own body, history, or experiences. Instead, I can reach out and feel his presence whenever I need or seek him, which brings a profound sense of comfort and guidance.





EV: That sounds so beautiful. I think there are many people listening who would love to continue that relationship with their loved one in the after-life. Some people think that the normal grieving process is to simply let them go.

MM: I believe it's quite the opposite. Jordan has made it abundantly clear to me that love continues without interruption or blockage after death. The love we share is just as strong; we can manifest and experience it fully. All we need to do is think about those we love on the other side—they are truly just a thought away. When we think about them and become aware of their presence, we open a channel for connection. Unfortunately, we often overlook this; we may simply feel love, sadness, or longing without realizing that our thoughts are actually initiating a form of communication. This is something Jordan has emphasized strongly. Ralph also taught me this concept when he introduced me to channeling. He explained that all the people we love on the other side are just a thought away. By directing our attention in a receptive way, asking questions, and being open, we can receive answers. This insight has proven to be very true for me.

I've taught hundreds of people how to channel, and almost all of them have been able to do it, receiving communications that have deeply impacted them. I often work with individuals who are in a state of grief. When they learn to channel, they

discover a profound truth: they haven't truly lost that person. The love that always existed between them continues, and they can tap into it whenever they wish. This realization has made a significant difference in my life, as it enables me to help those struggling with grief. Instead of suggesting they simply let go and move on, I guide them through a process of reaching out and finding ways to connect across the veil. This approach fosters healing and a sense of ongoing connection, rather than a sense of finality.

EV: How has that impacted your clients who you work with when you have guided them to connect with their loved ones? How has it ameliorated or alleviated their grief?

MM: There are a couple of important aspects to share. First, I am a psychotherapist specializing in treating trauma, including traumatic loss and death. I have learned to use Allan Botkin's technique of Induced After Death Communication (IADC), which complements my regular practice of EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing). EMDR is a standard treatment for traumatic loss, and IADC is a variation of this process that I incorporate into my work. Induced After Death Communication allows individuals to experience private communication with their departed loved ones, helping them come to terms with their grief and trauma. This technique has proven to be a powerful tool in my practice, enabling clients to connect with their loved ones and find healing in their grief.

I may not be as successful as Allan, as about 50 percent of my clients experience this connection, compared to his 90 percent success rate. However, when my clients do have the experience of actually



making contact with their loved ones, it is incredibly impactful. I've witnessed time and again that they can feel their loved one holding them. In many cases, they even see the person, and in all cases, they can hear them. This experience profoundly alters their grief, as they realize that their loved one is still present. The messages they receive are often incredibly significant; the loved ones communicate that they are with them, that they love and support them, and that their relationship continues. These are things my clients truly need to hear. When these moments occur, it is just profound and beautiful. I can't express enough how privileged and grateful I feel to witness these connections.

I also teach my clients to channel, which can be even more valuable because it facilitates a real conversation. This allows them to ask questions and engage in a dialogue. For instance, when a loved one says something interesting or important, clients can inquire, "What does that mean?" or "Tell me more about that," or even "I don't understand." This interactive conversation helps them uncover deeper insights about their relationship. They can explore questions like, "Why did that loved one leave at this point?" This process not only fosters connection but also provides clarity and understanding, enriching their healing journey.

Often, there's still important work that clients can do within their relationship, such as gaining understanding and making sense of events that occurred during their lives. They can continue this process through channeled communication, which is a truly beautiful aspect of this experience. Not only is the relationship not over, and the love still active and ongoing, but the learning processes that were part of their relationship can also persist. As they engage in conversation with their loved ones, they can work through unresolved feelings and

insights, deepening their connection and understanding.

EV: How is the receptivity to this process among your psychologist and psychotherapy colleagues?

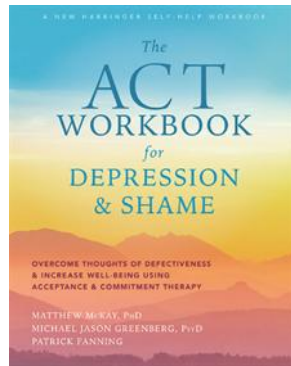
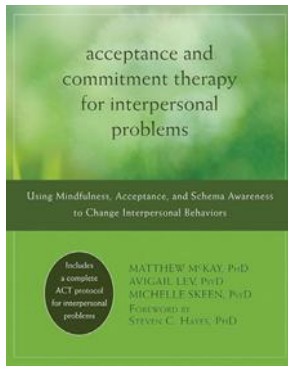
MM: My perspective is mixed. While I am a psychologist, I also identify as a researcher. Over the years, I have conducted numerous randomized controlled trials and developed five different kinds of evidence-based therapies. I am committed to science, and many of my colleagues share this commitment. However, some of them are quite uncomfortable with channeling.

For example, one researcher I know finds the concept so unsettling that he refuses to discuss it, considering it "crazy." He was particularly upset to learn that I engage in channeling and have even written books on the subject. On the other hand, I've worked with individuals who are on a deep spiritual quest. For them, channeling has provided an opportunity to deepen their spirituality, and they have embraced it wholeheartedly. Ultimately, I believe it depends on how open a person is to the possibility that life continues after death and their desire to maintain a connection with loved ones who have passed. The results have been quite mixed across different individuals.

Some people in my field have been incredibly receptive to my work and have even endorsed some of my books. However, for others, the concept of channeling seems to border on insanity, and they prefer to steer clear of it altogether. This divide highlights the varying perspectives within the community regarding the legitimacy and value of channeling practices.

EV: Yet it helps many people.





MM: Yes, channeling helps many people. Those who reject it often argue, “Yes, maybe it helps people, but that doesn’t mean it’s true.” They point out that there are many unconventional ideas that can be helpful, even if they aren’t strictly true. For example, Freud’s concepts of the ego, superego, and id don’t exist in a literal sense, but organizing our understanding of reality around these ideas can be beneficial for some individuals. In psychology, there are numerous ideas that may not be universally true but can provide valuable frameworks for people seeking to change their lives. For instance, I practice a type of therapy called Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). One of its core tenets is that we have no control over our thoughts or emotions. While this is a useful concept that encourages individuals to accept their thoughts and feelings, it’s not entirely accurate. In reality, we do have some degree of control over our thoughts and emotions. Although this notion of lacking control facilitates acceptance and personal growth, it’s important to recognize that it isn’t an absolute truth. This illustrates how certain psychological concepts can be useful even if they aren’t completely accurate.

EV: Earlier, you mentioned that Jordan shared about what the afterlife is like. Can you give us a little insight into what he shared with you about that? I know you’ve written a whole book on it.

Yosemite National Park

MM: He has been very open about this concept. From his perspective, the intention is to help me overcome my fear of death, or at least lessen it significantly. He describes a place called the landing place, which is adjacent to the spirit world. In the landing place, individuals begin to adjust to being without a physical body. They experience a shift in perception, seeing in 360 degrees rather than just straight ahead, and communicate telepathically instead of through sound. The landing place serves as a space for adjustment. Once we leave our bodies, any image or picture we hold in our minds can actually project outward energetically, allowing us to see it manifest.

For instance, Jordan described arriving at the landing place feeling somewhat disoriented. He thought about Yosemite National Park, seeking something peaceful, and suddenly found images of Yosemite appearing before him. Then, an image of an elephant came to his mind, and before he knew it, there was an elephant standing in Yosemite. He realized that whatever he thinks or imagines projects outward as an energy form. If someone arrives in the landing place filled with fear, they may project frightening images, and part of the learning process is understanding how to manage that. In the landing place, we gradually acclimate to the experience of being energy rather than a physical



body, which profoundly influences how we perceive and comprehend the world, as well as how we communicate.

Adjacent to the landing place are bardos, which serve as spaces for souls to recover, especially those who are experiencing significant pain and carrying intense, disturbing emotions. Souls in such states cannot enter the spirit world directly, so these bardos provide a necessary environment for processing and healing. In these bardos, there are healers who assist souls with damaged energy, helping them recover before they can transition into the spirit world. Both the landing place and the adjacent bardos focus on acclimating to the experience of no longer having a physical body and addressing any residual emotions, fears, and experiences that need to be processed before moving on to the spirit world.

Once we enter the spirit world, we typically undergo a life review almost immediately, a process that many individuals have described following near-death experiences. While the imagery used to describe this experience may vary, the essence remains the same. It involves a deep meditation where souls are held and guided by spiritual guides—other souls who are there to protect and support them throughout the process. This life review can be quite extensive, as it encompasses an examination of every single action and decision made throughout one's life. It's not just about significant choices, like career paths or places to live, but also the daily interactions we have with others. We reflect on how we engage with those around us and whether we bring love or other energies into those encounters and relationships. The review process allows us to assess all these decisions in various ways, providing a comprehensive understanding of our life experiences and their impacts.



During the life review process, we not only experience our own actions but also how those actions impacted others. For instance, a father reflecting on a moment when he slapped his son will not only feel his own experience but also deeply understand what that slap meant to his son. He can sense how that moment affected his son over the years, capturing the long-term emotional repercussions of his behavior. This review is a fascinating yet arduous process. It can be beautiful as well, allowing us to appreciate and celebrate positive aspects of our lives and choices. Importantly, this review occurs without judgment; it's not about labeling actions as good or bad. Instead, it emphasizes that every choice made was part of a learning journey. Even choices that caused pain are seen as opportunities for growth, reinforcing the idea that we are all here to learn.

After the review, souls typically rejoin their soul group, which consists of about six to twenty souls. You can think of a soul group as a kind of family that continues through countless lifetimes, with each member incarnating and returning to share their experiences and lessons learned. This soul group functions like a little classroom where significant learning occurs, supported by guides who assist each group. Additionally, soul groups often reside in a neighborhood of adjacent soul groups, fostering strong connections with one another.





We are also connected to souls that may be spatially distant in the afterlife, yet we come to love them due to significant experiences we've shared in past incarnations. While we have many souls nearby with whom we are close and often incarnate, there are also those who are more distant but have left a profound impact on us through important life experiences together. These connections highlight the interconnectedness of souls, emphasizing that relationships can transcend physical proximity. The bonds formed through shared journeys and lessons create lasting ties, allowing us to maintain love and connection with those souls, regardless of the distance in the afterlife.

Souls often incarnate together from their soul group and nearby groups, functioning like a repertory company that appears in similar times and places. In different lifetimes, these souls can take on various roles in each other's lives. For instance, in one life, you might be a romantic partner to someone, while in another, you could be a brother, a friend, or even an antagonist. I have someone in my soul group who has appeared in several of my lives, including this one, as an antagonist. This dynamic illustrates the complexity of our relationships across lifetimes, where the same soul can play different roles, contributing to our growth and learning through diverse experiences.

Jordan has appeared in various lives, each time taking on different roles. In a fairly recent in-

arnation, he was my wife, which was a profoundly different relationship compared to previous lives where he was my son or embodied a different gender. In another life, he was an unrequited love, and in yet another, he served as a guide. We even shared time together in Yeshiva, where he was an old rabbi. Each of these lives feels like a unique play in which we enter, taking on different roles that contribute to our shared experiences. It's truly beautiful to recognize how much we share—not just in a single lifetime, but over many lifetimes with our soul group and nearby souls. The depth and variety of these connections enrich our journeys and underscore the intricate tapestry of our relationships across time.

EV: How are you able to continue to communicate with him if he is having reincarnations?

MM: The concepts of *Ātman* and *Jīva* illustrate the idea that when the soul incarnates, it divides its energy. Part of this energy remains in the spirit world, while another part enters a physical body. The aspect of the soul that enters the physical realm undergoes a forgetting process, often described as amnesia.

This amnesia is crucial; without it, we might not take our earthly existence seriously. If we retained all memories of our past lives and knowledge from the afterlife, we might view our current life as less significant, thinking, "Oh, yes, this happened, but it's no big deal." The forgetting allows us to perceive this life as important and special, enabling us to truly feel the risks that seem to exist. To engage fully with these risks and respond to them, we must believe that this is our only life. Meanwhile, the energy that remains in the afterlife continues to influence our journey.



Jordan is currently incarnated as an early teen, being cared for by a single mother. In this life, he has no memory of being Jordan or of our past life together, nor does he recall the spirit world. However, the part of Jordan's energy that remains in the spirit world is always available for me to communicate with. This is true for anyone; even if a loved one is incarnating, their energy exists in the spirit realm, allowing for ongoing connection. While their energy may be divided during incarnation, nothing prevents us from communicating with them in spirit. In fact, we can also connect with our own soul and spirit, which holds a wealth of wisdom and knowledge. Through practices like deep knowledge meditation, we can communicate with our higher self. When channeling, we have the ability to reach out to our own higher self, loved ones, or guides. The key is to consider what address we are sending our questions and communications to, as we have choices in how we connect.

You can also channel the divine, though the outcome of those communications can differ from when you channel a specific soul. When channeling divine knowledge, it often manifests as awareness rather than words and language. This highlights that channeling isn't limited to just one soul on the other side; it's versatile and allows for various connections. You have the ability to choose your address when channeling. You can reach out to guides, any number of souls you know or care for, or even your own higher self. This gives you the freedom to decide who you want to communicate with, enhancing the richness of your spiritual interactions.

EV: What do you say to folks who may be listening and thinking, "You just need to let them be and allow them to continue on in the afterlife. By staying

in communication, you're somehow affecting their ability to move forward?"

MM: That's completely, according to Jordan anyway, not true. Souls in the afterlife have the capacity to focus on multiple things at once. They're not like us; they are not limited by a human brain that can only focus on what's directly in front of us. Souls in the afterlife can be engaged in five or six different activities simultaneously. They could be in a classroom—though not literally—learning something with a guide. They might also be reviewing the Akashic Records, examining different choices they made, and exploring, "What would have happened if I did X instead of Y?" They could be engaging in what could be termed spiritual tourism, visiting different planets and observing what occurs there. They might study the history of the universe or merge with the all, which we do periodically.

In the afterlife, we typically spend relatively short periods merging with the all, observing knowledge very quickly and deeply. Additionally, they can be spending time with loved ones, observing and supporting them on Earth. Souls in the afterlife can do all of this at once because they can divide their attention in amazing ways. Therefore, we are not limiting them or preventing their growth and evolution by continuing to talk to them. In fact, it's the opposite: when we give them love, they feel it. It's a meaningful experience for those on the other side. Our love touches them, and they take it in. When we communicate with them or think of them with love, they receive something beautiful and positive.

It's the exact opposite of using them, deflecting, or somehow helping them distract from their purpose and work in the afterlife. In reality, our



work is to love. When they spend time connecting with us through love, that's precisely what they're doing—they're loving. That's what we do in the afterlife: we love. They are fulfilling their purpose.

EV: That is what we're learning to do here, as well.

MM: Yes. That's what we're learning to do here as well. The whole point of becoming a soul is to learn how to love. In learning how to love, everything we learn is uploaded to the all and becomes part of its evolution.

You can think of it like this: souls exist in the afterlife or the spirit world, much like bees in a hive. We venture out of the hive to collect nectar, which represents our experiences, knowledge, and wisdom. We are learning. Then we bring that back to the hive. Essentially, we support and nurture the hive and contribute to its growth and development with each trip into incarnated life and all that we learn there.

EV: If we are all divine and we are really love, why is it so hard for us to always be loving?

MM: Well, that's something that has been perhaps one of the most important insights Jordan has conveyed to me. He says, "Look, in the afterlife or the spirit world, love is what connects everybody." It's effortless on some level. Souls can merge with each other and experience profound feelings of love and connection. They can also merge with the divine and feel a deep sense of love and connection. Love is the gravity that holds everything together, that unites all of consciousness. Again, it's effortless; it's the air we breathe in the spirit world. However, love that is unearned and effortless is something we don't really know how to create. We come to

Earth to learn how to cultivate it in the face of all the difficulties, struggles, and pain that exist on the physical plane.

Let me give a silly example. Imagine a mom who has had a very difficult day at work. Something happened that made her feel anxious about her job. She's also very tired and depleted. When she arrives home, her child is in the midst of a challenging homework situation, having had a bad day at school as well, and needs a lot of support and encouragement. In this scenario, love requires that the mom somehow manage her tiredness and anxiety while fully committing to and intending to support and care for her child in this moment of need. You see, you can't learn that kind of love in the afterlife because there's no friction. There's nothing getting in the way; there's no pain.

Part of what makes this such a sacred mission here is learning how to love amidst all the obstacles and pain, including tiredness. For example, let's say you're in a relationship with a partner who has said something really critical about you. Suddenly, there's this overwhelming sense of shame and the feeling that something is wrong with you—"Oh my God, I'm bad, I'm failing." In response, there's a strong urge to cover that feeling and get rid of it. "I don't want to feel this pain, so I'll get angry to mask my shame, or I'll withdraw and shut them out." This pain often drives us to act in ways that are the opposite of love, leading to disconnection. When I suddenly feel ashamed and believe there's something wrong with me, I must ask myself: What would love have me do in this moment? In the face of that pain, love would guide me to learn more about what's troubling my partner and what I could do to help them feel better. That's what love would prompt me to do. In the face of pain, we are constantly faced with choices between love and



coping mechanisms, such as avoidance or pushing away that pain. We come here to learn how to love in these challenging situations. You cannot learn how to love in the absence of pain; that is why we come.

EV: Then that deepens the love that we all experience in the afterlife.

MM: Yes, it deepens our capacity for love in the afterlife because we've learned how to love in the face of obstacles, pain, and difficult emotions, including physical pain. We learn to love despite all of that. This knowledge is carried into the afterlife, resulting in a deeper love. What makes our love deeper is that we begin to see more clearly—more clearly what it means to be a soul and what it means to be conscious. Consciousness must encompass all of that: it must hold all the pain and still find a way to love.

EV: Beautiful.

MM: That's what Jordan emphasizes repeatedly when he discusses love on Earth in the book. He highlights that we must learn to love in the face of pain, loss, and impermanence. Ultimately, we need to evolve our love so that we are loving all—everything—rather than just our own tribe. We must recognize when our emotions, pain, and needs urge us to protect ourselves at the expense of others. That is the work we are engaged in. He is very, very clear about this, conveying the reason why we're here.

EV: I'd love to hear a few more messages from Jordan in just a moment. Why is this not more natural for more people, do you think? Why does it



seem to take a little effort to communicate with our loved ones in the afterlife? Or is it possible that really it's just effortless, but we don't allow ourselves to focus on it?

MM: Well, our belief systems—and often our religions—don't encourage this idea. For example, I had a client recently who expressed hesitation about the possibility of communicating with his son who had passed away. He said, "Oh no, in my religion, we can only talk to God. We can't talk to the dead. We're not allowed." He was very clear about that. I think sometimes our belief systems exclude the notion of being able to communicate with the dead or that love extends beyond death. This can create barriers for people.

I think another important point is that many people are waiting for their loved ones to communicate with them, often in a passive manner. They look for signs—something that indicates their loved one is still present and aware of them. While many people do receive signs, as we did with Jordan, they often believe that this is the extent of communication. It doesn't occur to them that communication could be a two-way street; they can engage actively by asking questions and expressing their feelings to their loved ones just as their loved ones can communicate with them. They can use words, rather than relying solely on images, symbols, or events. Many people simply don't realize





that this kind of active communication is possible. They're often focused on looking for a sign rather than seeking actual communication.

One of the key teachings from Jordan is that we must learn to love everything, including the ugly and the deformed. He emphasizes that the person with the greatest damage can often teach us the most about love. This concept of loving everything goes beyond just appreciating beauty or loving beautiful souls; it involves embracing everything—even the most damaged souls and the most flawed aspects of existence. It's about being able to appreciate and love things for what they are.

EV: In your experiences helping people with trauma, grief, and loss, there's often this idea that one needs to let go and move on. When connecting with a passed loved one, have you found that this affects a person's ability to, for example, seek a new partner after losing a significant other? Or in your case, after losing your son, did connecting with him impact your relationships with your other children or with children in general?

MM: It's actually quite the opposite. Communicating with those on the other side does not hinder moving on with life; rather, it enhances it. I continue to live my life with Jordan, and his support and energy have profoundly changed my experience. These connections do not prevent me

from moving forward; they empower me to pursue things I might never have attempted otherwise. I don't believe that these communications block the souls on the other side from their work or hinder us from our own work of evolving and growing after the physical loss of a loved one. In fact, I think the relationships we maintain help us grow and continue to express love, benefiting both sides.

Jordan's life is enhanced because our love remains so active. My life is enriched as I feel his support and guidance. So, it's really the opposite of what many think. When we attempt to let go of our loved ones and say, "Oh, it's over"—as if their life, their love, and our connection have ended—we are actually truncating our own lives. This mindset denies the love that continues to exist and that we could still hold and experience. By denying it, we limit our lives rather than expand them and allow ourselves to move forward into a new phase of life.

EV: You've received many messages from Jordan, and you touched on this earlier. Could you share, what does he say God or the divine is?

MM: From Jordan's perspective, God did not always exist. Growing up Catholic, I was taught that God is eternal and perfect. However, Jordan suggests otherwise, stating, "No. There was always primal energy in the dark unknown." He describes a state of nothingness, where this primal energy existed, waiting like a train that has yet to arrive. In this analogy, while waiting for the train, there is only the potential for its arrival; the energy of the train is not yet present, but it could be. This primal energy represents potential without reality, and ultimately, it serves as a source of consciousness.

There's a whole process by which primal energy began to transform into light. As this energy



evolved, the light became conscious, leading Jordan to state, “Light is the source of consciousness.” This evolution marked the beginning of God, of the divine. The essence of God is to grow, evolve, and learn. That is the purpose of consciousness. Eventually, God started creating smaller units of consciousness to inhabit the universe, learn from it, and bring that knowledge back. The divine is in a constant state of evolution, growth, and learning. God does not require praise or devotion; such things are completely irrelevant. The divine doesn’t need our prayers proclaiming its greatness; it is beyond those needs. The reason for this is that we are all part of the divine. We are all God. God doesn’t need to praise itself, as we all share one consciousness.

Another important point is that the divine does not judge us. No one is cast out because we are all part of the divine. For the divine to cast someone out would mean casting out a part of itself. There is no hell or place where souls are judged and condemned. Instead, God creates environments for us, as part of the divine, to learn and grow. God, too, evolves and grows; that is the essence of God.

We often pray to God to fix our problems, but Jordan explains that this is not really God’s role. God is not a puppet master pulling strings or deciding our fates—such as whether we will get sick or if our prayers will ensure our football team wins. God sets everything in motion and sends souls to experience life, but does not intervene directly.

However, God can provide guidance. We can pray for guidance from God or our loved ones on the other side, and we can receive it. But we cannot expect direct interventions, like curing a disease or preventing conflict. Instead, we can seek wisdom and direction to navigate our experiences.

EV: Our thoughts and collective consciousness has impact, though.

MM: Yes, collectively, we can impact reality. Through collective consciousness, we have the power to create a planet, a universe, and all kinds of experiences together. However, once God sets something in motion and sends souls to incarnate, God does not intervene to fix things. We come into this life to face the endless sources of cause and effect that shape our experiences. Our responsibility is to respond to these challenges rather than to expect God to intervene and resolve them for us.

EV: What is the nature of the soul? Why do we exist and come here? You’ve touched on some of that already.

MM: Collective consciousness, God, the all, the divine, divides into units of consciousness that are here to learn. Souls engage in learning both in the afterlife and in the spirit world, where various forms of education occur. Souls also learn during their incarnate lives. God creates souls or divides into smaller units of consciousness specifically for the purpose of experiencing learning, making choices, failing, and growing from those failures and mistakes. This is our mission and our sacred work. Our task is the evolution of our own souls—the growth and development of our individual consciousness. On a broader level, this process contributes to the growth, development, and evolution of God itself. This is our purpose; it is why we were created.

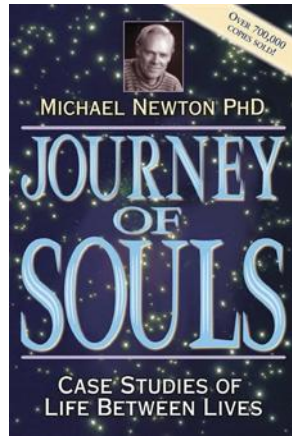
One of the unfortunate aspects of many spiritual traditions, such as nonduality, is the suggestion that much of our experience is an illusion. They propose that the material world isn’t real, and



that we are merely individual dreams or hallucinated aspects of God. This perspective can feel disheartening, as it implies that our suffering and experiences lack purpose. However, Jordan emphasizes, particularly in this book, that there is a significant purpose to our existence. The purpose is learning, growth, and evolution. The entire physical universe was created for us to enter as individual souls, allowing us to learn and evolve within a tangible environment. This is our sacred mission; it is not purposeless or merely a fleeting experience in the vastness of divine consciousness.

I believe what he wants to convey is that there is a profound purpose and reason for our existence. The physical world exists for the same reason: for us to grow and evolve, and for God to grow and evolve. That is the whole point of it. The physical world is real in the sense that it is something we all share, and it allows us to learn from one another. If we were all trapped in our individual dreams or delusions, we wouldn't be able to learn from each other. For example, how does a pitcher learn how to pitch? A pitcher learns because the same laws of energy and physics apply to a moving ball, wind, spin, and other factors. One pitcher can learn from another because we all share the same experience. This shared experience enables us to learn and grow together, allowing us to share our wisdom. That's why this existence isn't an illusion; it is a collective experience designed for one purpose: so that we can grow and evolve.

EV: What has he shared with you about predestiny or life plan versus free will?



MM: We are presented with a variety of choices for possible lives. In Michael Newton's *Journey of Souls*, he regresses individuals through hypnosis to the space between lives, where they are shown multiple potential lives and choose the one they will live. What they see are possibilities: a life set in a specific environment, with a body that may have certain liabilities or challenges. They can envision various potential events likely to occur in that life. For instance, one life may unfold during World War II, impacting them with the weight of a global conflict, while another might involve a family member who is a sociopath, causing significant harm. They can discern some outlines of their future existence. However, there remains a substantial degree of free will and choice throughout that lifetime. As life unfolds, the clarity of what will happen diminishes. Many of the events that seemed likely at the time of choosing will indeed occur, but as choices are made—by themselves and those around them—some expected outcomes may not materialize, and entirely different experiences may arise. This is due to the presence of free will; to some extent, we possess the freedom to choose. Our decisions can significantly influence the direction our lives take, steering us toward paths we might not have anticipated.

EV: So it sounds like it's both.

MM: Yes, there's an amazing paradox that Jordan discusses regarding time. From the spirit world, we can observe the entire history of the world—from beginning to end. However, the paradox lies in the fact that some of these outcomes may shift based on the billions of decisions that individual souls make on this planet. For instance, consider how we will address global warming; the future of our



planet will ultimately hinge on billions of decisions made collectively. There exists a likely future or a possible outcome, but this can be altered by the myriad choices individuals make. Therefore, while destiny appears to be set, it simultaneously remains fluid and subject to change.

EV: What has Jordan shared with you about why he left Earth when he did, because he was very young, and he passed in a very tragic way.

MM: He has been very clear that he expected to have a short life, and that the purpose of this life was very specific. He was recovering from a particularly difficult past life filled with violence. His intention was to re-enter the Earth plane in a situation that offered relatively more support and peace, which would aid in his recovery. In his most immediate past life, he was a bootlegger. Interestingly, there are remnants from that life that carry over; for example, he was terrified of the police even as a child. This fear was a direct bleed-over from his past experiences.

One of the key aspects he was gaining from this life was a certain degree of recovery, allowing him to experience the physical plane without violence and with a measure of support and peace. Additionally, he was focused on very specific goals, such as learning to use his will, following through on decisions, and making things happen. He was actively developing his willpower, which he considered the main work of this life—skills he intended to carry into his next incarnation. The primary themes of his journey included recovery and the development of willpower, as well as overcoming fear. Although he was very adventurous, he experienced significant fear as a child, likely a bleed-over from his past life. Over time, he became extremely



adventurous and deeply embraced the beauty of nature. These were other important lessons he was learning in this life. Ultimately, he had a life purpose or a specific lesson plan guiding his experiences.

It's worth noting that when we incarnate, we are working on two levels. On one level, we are striving to understand how to love in the face of pain, which serves as the overarching purpose of each life. On another level, we have an individual lesson plan that focuses on specific aspects of our soul's development. These elements are particularly relevant to his individual journey.

EV: Are there other loved ones, family members, friends of Jordan's who have been able to communicate with him like you do?

MM: To my knowledge, no one uses channeling in the traditional sense. However, he communicates with people in various ways, demonstrating his presence in their lives. Each of them has experienced his presence in some form. For instance, I have a dear friend who has been very close to him in the afterlife. While she was reading one of his books, he turned the lights on and off in her bedroom to affirm, "Yes, I'm here." He has found unique ways to connect and reassure people of his presence. But to my knowledge, I am the only one who channels him.





EV: Why is it that some spirits and souls are able to impact the physical world, like with flashing lights or even sending messages that people can hear auditorily, come into dreams, or appear as apparitions? A lot of people really want those signs; they want something physical, while others need to go into meditation to receive them, such as how you have.

MM: Yes, this is what Jordan explains to me. I'll pass it on for what it's worth. There are young souls who have only had a few lives, then there are old souls, and then there are those in between who have had hundreds of lives. Many souls are just starting out. When they begin, they are very vulnerable because they enter this body, and it's like the Wild West—full of emotions, impulses, and desires. Young souls have a lot of difficulty managing their bodies and often get caught in pleasure-pain cycles. Additionally, young souls have less control; their consciousness has less influence over things.

These young souls, when they're in the afterlife, don't possess some of the skills that older souls have. They may not be able to manipulate physical objects. In fact, it takes extensive experience from many incarnations and life in the afterlife to gain the ability to manipulate physical objects. It's much easier to enter a dream than to influence electricity or something similar. For example, one time we

were at a place having dinner, and someone was playing guitar and singing a very meaningful song to us. It was something that Jordan used to sing, and afterward, he said, "I don't know why I sang that, but I had this sudden need to do it." This indicates that Jordan was communicating with us; he was able to enter the guitarist's consciousness and direct him in some way.

I think many spirits can enter animal consciousness, but it's not as if they are the animal. They can connect with the animal's consciousness and cause it to do something a bit strange or unusual to get your attention and remind you of their presence. However, some souls are relatively young and have very little skill in this area. The ability to manipulate physical things or enter consciousness—whether human or animal—varies significantly depending on the skill level of the soul.

EV: Some may say we're not meant to interact with those in the other side that much so that we can focus on our lives here. Does that play a role somehow, do you think, with communication that's so overt?

MM: I think it's possible that we could become so involved with the soul on the other side that we relinquish some of the important things we're doing in our lives. We might get obsessed with those communications and somehow lose sight of our work here and what our soul is trying to accomplish. I don't think that's very common, but it is possible.

I will say this: Jordan has told me that souls are very reluctant and somewhat forbidden to predict the future. They can see the future to some extent, though the future can change based on individual choices and free will. They can perceive the likely future, but they are encouraged—and almost



forbidden—to share that future with us. We need to make our own choices. They can support us and sometimes advise us. Jordan advises me quite a bit. However, they cannot say, “OK, this is going to happen. You have to do this, or to avoid this future, you must do X.” They won't say that. We are here to learn, and providing that kind of guidance would interfere with our life experiences.

EV: For those who want to be able to communicate with their loved ones, can you share steps in that direction or how you guide people in meditation?

MM: Yes, it's actually fairly simple. First of all, you need a notebook because channel writing involves writing. It really helps to physically write your questions and to physically write the answers. This not only aids in opening the communication but also deepens your meditative state and receptivity. Having a notebook helps you remember all the things you learned and experienced during the conversation. I often look back at my conversations with Jordan from the past, and it's wonderful because I get to recall things I had forgotten. So, definitely get a notebook.

Number two, get something for eye fixation. A candle is simple; looking at a flame is great. You can also look at a mandala or some object, or even a picture of your beloved. A candle flame is nice because it holds your attention in a gentle way. Additionally, it's beneficial to have something that connects you to your beloved. A physical object that they owned or gave you is ideal, or something that reminds you of them if you don't have an item they owned. For example, I know someone whose partner used to enjoy walking the beach with her, and they would pick up stones together. One par-

ticular stone has become the object that connects them. So, you have eye fixation and an object that connects you to your beloved.

Now, you want to find a comfortable place. I use the same spot; where I'm sitting right now is where I channel with Jordan. It's a familiar and comfortable place, and you're trying to create a ritual. The next step is a simple breath-based meditation. There are other methods you can use, such as hypnosis or even prayer, to open the channel, but the simplest one for me is breath-based meditation. Breath-based meditation has three parts. The first part involves bringing your attention down to your diaphragm, focusing on the center of breath awareness. The second part is noting your breath. I count each out-breath: the first out-breath is one, the next is two, three, four, and so on, up to ten. Then I start repeating the count. So, I'm simply noticing or noting my breath by counting each out-breath. The third part occurs when a thought arises; you bring your attention back to your breath. This is a breath-based meditation, a focusing meditation that helps to open the channel. If my mind feels chattery, I'll do several rounds of ten until I sense a certain quietness and openness, a receptivity. However, it doesn't have to take long; it might be just three or four minutes, or five minutes a day. The important thing is to allow that quietness to settle in.

Next, bring your awareness to your beloved person. You're about to open the channel, and your intention is to do so. Ralph taught me to visualize an orb, the color of the sun, just above my head. When I visualize it now, I can actually feel something in my scalp—a reciprocal response in my body. Visualize that orb and then imagine it elongating, turning into a tube. This is the channel. You're opening it all the way to your beloved, and it sits right at the top of your head. Now it's a channel



of two, as it connects all the way to your beloved. At that moment, you've opened the channel. Just be aware of your love for that soul, and be mindful of your intention to communicate back and forth.

Now that you've opened the channel, write your first question down in your notebook, whatever it may be. It's important to take the time to write it out. Then, wait. Just wait for whatever comes to mind, because your loved one is going to communicate telepathically. Wait and jot down the first word that appears. For the next word, write that down too. If there's a period of waiting, just remain patient until the next word, words, phrase, or the completion of a sentence arrives. Don't worry about what it is; simply write whatever comes.

Oftentimes, the first couple of sentences that Jordan writes don't make sense to me initially. If I just wait, however, it eventually becomes clear, and the communication takes shape. What I'm saying is, don't worry if the first words of the sentence don't quite compute. Keep the channel open and write down the very next thing that appears. Our minds are never truly empty; they will either contain something we've put in or something being channeled and communicated telepathically. Just wait for the telepathic communication, and whatever shows up, write it down. Something will come.

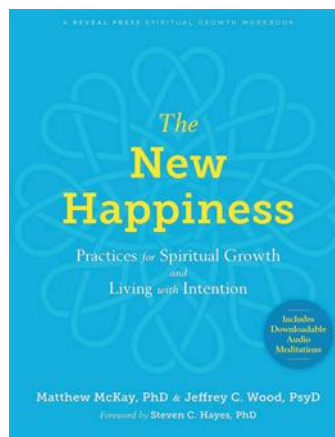
I often hear people say, "Well, nothing is coming." I believe that's not possible; your mind cannot be empty. You have to write down whatever appears and trust that if you do, it will eventually make sense. Doubts may arise, and that's okay. Just continue to write down what comes to you.

The communication can manifest in different ways. It can come as a download—an entire body of knowledge without words, just a sense of understanding. For example, once Jordan downloaded an entire psychotherapy approach to me, which later became a book, all in the span of about ten seconds, including images but no words—just the whole concept. It can also appear as brief bullet points, consisting of three or four words or a phrase, or it can come as a rapid stream of words, so fast that you can barely keep up. Additionally, it might show up as pictures—images without any language at all. What I'm emphasizing is that communication can arise in many different forms, and it's important to remain open to however it presents itself. Embrace it as it comes.

EV: Thank you for sharing that with us. What do you say when people are questioning if they're making it up?

MM: Doubts will always be present; I have doubts myself. I believe most channelers experience doubts. However, I ask myself: does it feel like I'm hearing from my beloved on an emotional level? Do their words resonate as things they would say to me? Are they showing me things that are meaningful? I think that's the test—do you have an emotional reaction to the communication?

This is important because often, when Jordan says things to me, I have emotional reactions to them. This tells me that there's something authentic happening between us; he is expressing something, and I am genuinely responding to it, rather than just creating the expe-



rience myself. I encourage people to engage in this practice for a while and observe the body of what emerges. Is what comes out beneficial? Is it helpful? Does it feel like they're receiving love from their loved one and experiencing that connection? If so, then keep doing it. Those doubts will arise periodically, but if the experience is good for them, it's worth continuing.

EV: Both of my parents passed into the spirit world in the last few years—specifically, within the last three years. I took a guided imagery training almost 20 years ago, and during that training, it was revealed to us—something we witnessed in class—that people can spontaneously have their deceased loved ones come to them.

Over the years, I've been able to communicate with several friends who have died, as well as other loved ones, and I want to share that it has been very comforting for me to connect with my parents. When I connect with them, they are smiling and seem happy. My dad loved trains, planes, and automobiles, and it feels like he has gone out to test every airplane. The messages I receive from them are generally very supportive and encouraging regarding my life.

MM: It's very beautiful, and I'm glad you've been able to create those openings in the curtain so that you can stay connected and keep feeling the love from them.

EV: Yes. They let me know that they're waiting for me, that they'll be there for me with the transition. Is that something?...

MM: That's very interesting. Jordan says the same thing to me. He promises he will be there for me.



EV: Wow.

MM: I feel teary when I say that. That means a lot to me.

EV: I'm crying too now. Oh, beautiful. Oh my gosh. Matthew, thank you so much for all that you've shared today. I know you've given a lot for those listening to contemplate. I want to just briefly read one small passage from your book because we talk a lot about consciousness and the various aspects of it on *New Thinking Allowed*.

In your book, in the section it says:
*Everything changes but something remains.
Yet consciousness never erodes.
Our soul, unlike our brain, never forgets.
We take with us every lesson.
Everything we love teaches us,
every moment of pain and every
struggle teaches us.
Each new thing we learn is sewn forever
into our soul consciousness.*

MM: Thank you. That's very much the essence of, I think, what Jordan is trying to say.

EV: I love that we both got the same messages from our loved ones. So there's some validity there.

MM: Yes.





EV: For those of you watching or listening, thank you for being with us. You are the reason that we are here.

EV: Matthew, is there anything else you want to share today about after-death communication or any other messages that Jordan has shared with you that you think our viewers would benefit from?

MM: I want to encourage your viewers to connect with someone on the other side if they wish to do so, and not to be afraid of it. Just take that step, as it can enrich your life. It will provide you with support that goes beyond the living; it includes the support of those on the other side who love us deeply. You can receive more than just support; you can gain guidance as well. I urge anyone who wants to communicate with the other side to go ahead and do it. What I've shared is exactly what I do—there's nothing mysterious or special about it.

EV: Because our loved ones on the other side—or what seems to be the other side—also want to connect with us?

MM: Yes. They're just a thought away.

EV: Matt, thank you so much for all that you've shared today. I really appreciate it. Thank you so much for being with me.

MM: I really appreciate it, Emmy. Thank you so much.

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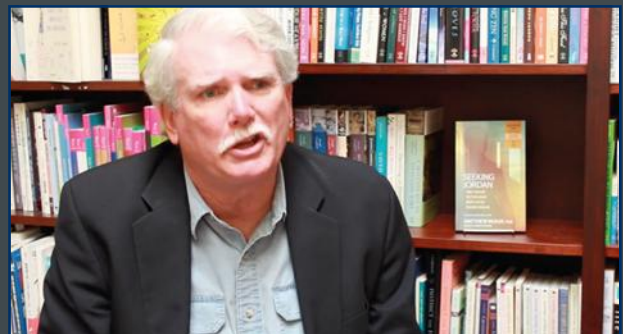
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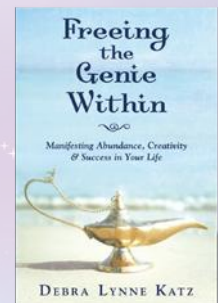
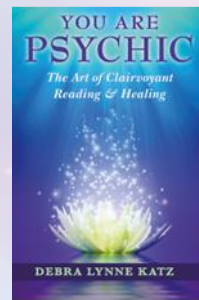
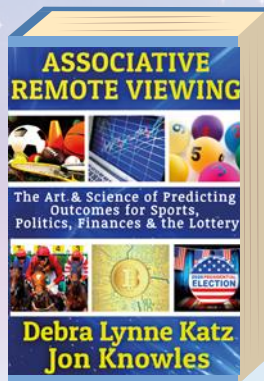
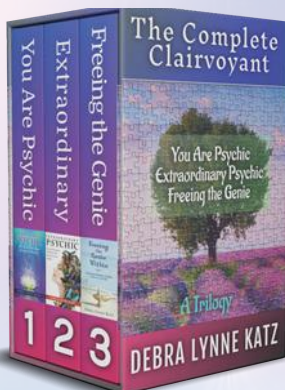
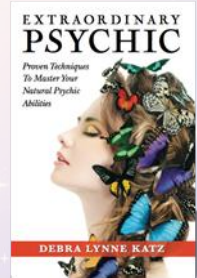


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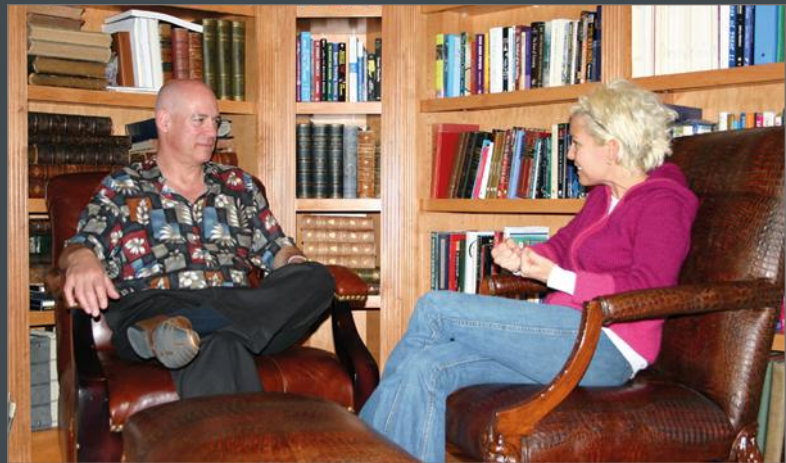
Leanne Whitney

Our everyday perception of reality, filtered through the five senses, often reinforces the notion of a world defined by separation, independence and plurality—an ingrained perspective in Euro-American culture. Yet, an unexpected pure consciousness event in July of 2000 transformed my understanding of this concept, revealing a deep-seated innate knowing that consciousness is all there is and knowledge is structured in it. This experience, more real than any other I had before it, ignited philosophical questions and an enduring quest to reconcile multiplicity and unity. Through years of exploration, trial and error, I have sought not only to understand but to live in a way that merges the reality behind my eyes with the complex, multifaceted world in front of me. This journey has been one of evolving from a dualistic perception to an embodied recognition that everything is interdependent and interconnected.

Driven by this worldview, in 2004 I began a documentary film project on the evolution of human consciousness. I reached out to thought leaders in the field of consciousness studies, including Jeff Mishlove. When he agreed to be interviewed, he offered both encouragement and caution, ob-

serving, “You are taking on a big topic.” In early 2005, I traveled with a small film crew to his home in Las Vegas where Jeff and I explored an immensely insightful dialogue about intuition, consciousness, human potential and the unknown. That year, I also had the privilege of interviewing luminaries such as Russell Targ, Peter Russell, and Gary Zukav. Each interview deepened my reverence for the boundless, interconnected nature of consciousness.

As the project unfolded, I found myself grappling with how to shape such an immense subject. Jeff’s words about the enormity of the topic echoed in my mind and, ultimately, the third act eluded me. I realized I needed some time away



Jeffrey Mishlove and Leanne Whitney, 2005



from making the film and possibly a new approach to the overall structure. Seeking deeper insight, I chose to pursue graduate studies and earned a PhD in depth psychology. This academic journey opened new doors and allowed me to explore the psyche through a Jungian-oriented depth psychological lens.

Depth psychology, as developed by Jung and others, is a science of the invisible—a field that seeks to uncover hidden layers of the psyche. Jung’s belief in the religious function of the psyche connected with me powerfully, especially as he sought to reconcile scientific inquiry with religious experience. He engaged with Eastern philosophies and nondual traditions, finding value in systems like Patañjali’s Classical Yoga, which considers pure consciousness as the ontological reality. Jung and Patañjali’s works complement each other, inviting a dialogue between Euro-American and Indian culture that questions a dualistic worldview and points toward wholeness. This synthesis has guided much of my work, from my academic studies to my therapeutic practice.



Following my studies, I began work in the healing arts, integrating Jungian-oriented therapy, transformational coaching, and somatic practices. The shift toward healing and therapeutic work allowed me to translate the theoretical into the practical, helping individuals navigate their inner journeys. Whether through therapy, coaching, or somatic integration, each session brought new insights into the workings of the psyche and reaffirmed the profound interconnectedness that my early studies, projects and insights had pointed to. I’m continually inspired by both my clients and colleagues whose commitment to growth and healing energizes and informs my work. My practical experience, along with my academic background, inspired me to write several journal articles as well as a book based on my dissertation: *Consciousness in Jung and Patanjali*.

In 2023, I founded *Center for Transformation and Integration*, grounded in the belief that true healing requires integrating our mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual selves. Our Center fosters a compassionate community where indi-



with Gary Zukav, 2005



with Russell Targ, 2005





Together, Leanne Whitney and Shilah Sarkissian lead the Center with a commitment to integrate diverse healing modalities and fostering deep, transformative growth for individuals and communities.

The podcast's mission—to explore the leading edge of knowledge and discovery—resonates greatly with my own explorations into consciousness and human potential. It reinforces my belief that conversations about expanded perception and interconnectedness can spark meaningful dialogue that can bridge divides and move us closer to unity.

As a guest host, my intention is to blend open-hearted curiosity with thoughtful inquiry. My approach is to explore topics that engage both the intellect and the soul: the nature of psychic phenomena, the wisdom of ancient spiri-

viduals can explore their inner landscapes, deepen self-understanding and embark on journeys of self-realization. We provide a range of therapeutic modalities, educational resources and transformative practices, empowering individuals to cultivate authenticity and to live purposefully. Our flagship program, a certification in Transformational Coaching with an Emphasis in Somatic Integration Therapy, is led by Center's Education Director, Shilah Sarkissian and is designed to equip coaches with skills that support profound mind-body integration. At the heart of our work is a commitment to interconnectedness—between individuals, communities, and the environment—creating a space for personal and collective transformation.

Although I have instigated and led many creative projects over the last two decades, throughout these years the desire to return to film production and share stories about the evolution of human consciousness has never left me. When Jeff invited me to guest host on *New Thinking Allowed* in the fall of 2023, it felt like a full-circle moment, a return to the seeds I had planted back in 2004.



Website: Center for Transformation & Integration

tual traditions and the psychological landscapes we all navigate. I envision these conversations as a space to push the boundaries of understanding and inspire a sense of wonder. In a world grappling with the nature of truth and craving connection and meaning, *New Thinking Allowed* is a beacon, and I'm thrilled to be part of this evolving dialogue.

Leanne Olty



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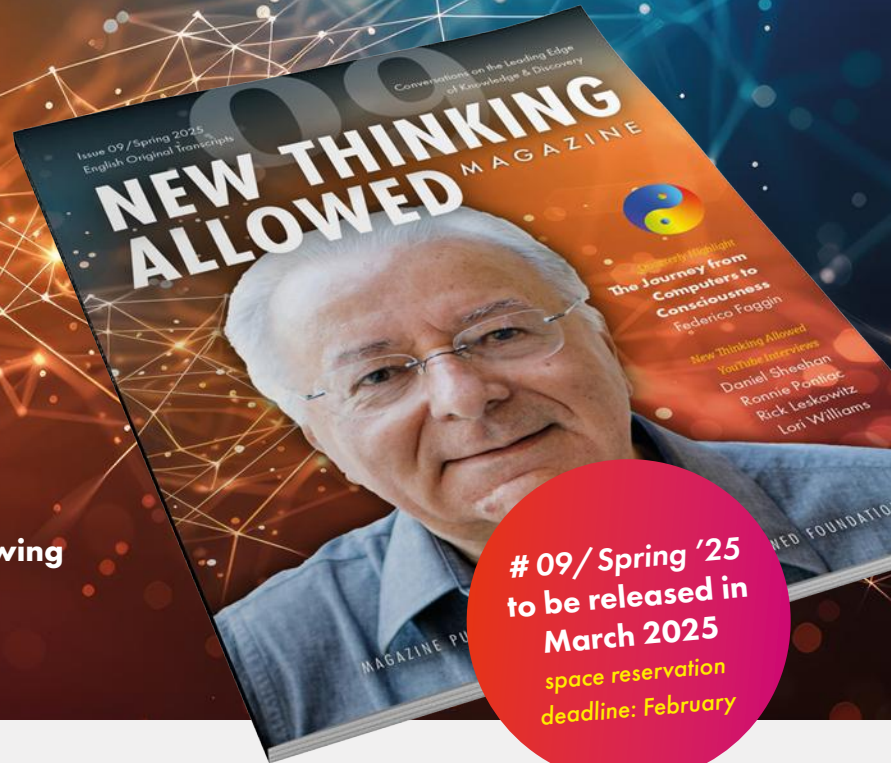
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